41: Ewers

NF6 Blackfoot NF6

462
562
834

[For information on male-female differences in painting styles, see Categories 531 and 532, pp. 15-B--16-A, 19-B--20-B.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

105 the still morning air. Everywhere the women are busy,
512 carrying water and wood, and preparing the simple meal.
[515] And now we see the men come out, and start for the river. Some are followed by their children; some are even carrying those too small to walk. They have reached the water's edge. Off drop their blankets, and with a plunge and a shivering *ah-h-h* they dash into the icy waters. Winter and
[147] summer, storm or shine, this was their daily custom. They said it made them tough and healthy, and enabled them to endure the bitter cold while hunting on the bare bleak
[264] prairie. By the time they have returned to the lodges, the
[252] women have prepared the early meal. A dish of boiled
[262] meat — some three or four pounds — is set before each man; the children are served as much as they can eat, and the wives take the rest. The horses are now seen coming in, hundreds and thousands of them, driven by boys and
[224] young men who started out after them at daylight. If
[462] buffalo are close at hand, and it has been decided to make a run, each hunter catches his favorite buffalo horse, and they all start out together; they are followed by women, on the travois or pack horses, who will do most of the butchering, and transport the meat and hides to camp. If there is no
[224] band of buffalo near by, they go off, singly or by twos and
[462] threes, to still-hunt scattering buffalo, or deer, or elk, or such other game as may be found. The women remaining in camp are not idle. All day long they tan robes, dry meat, sew moccasins, and perform a thousand and one other
[302] tasks. The young men who have stayed at home carefully
[832] comb and braid their hair, paint their faces, and, if the weather is pleasant, ride or walk around the camp so that the young women may look at them and see how pretty they are.

514 Feasting began early in the morning, and will be carried
105 on far into the night. A man who gives a feast has his
512 wives cook the choicest food they have, and when all is

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

The children, at least the boys, played about and did as they pleased. Not so with the girls. Their duties began at a very early age. They carried wood and water for their mothers, sewed moccasins, and as soon as they were strong enough, were taught to tan robes and furs, make lodges, travois, and do all other woman's — and so menial — work. The boys played at mimic warfare, hunted around in the brush with their bows and arrows, made mud images of animals, and in summer spent about half their time in the water. In winter, they spun tops on the ice, slid down hill on a contrivance made of buffalo ribs, and hunted rabbits.

Shortly after noon, the hunters began to return, bringing in deer, antelope, buffalo, elk, occasionally bear, and, sometimes, beaver which they had trapped. The camp began to be more lively. In all directions persons could be heard shouting out invitations to feasts. Here a man was lying back on his couch singing and drumming; there a group of young men were holding a war dance; everywhere the people were eating, singing, talking, and joking. As the light faded from the western sky and darkness spread over the camp, the noise and laughter increased. In many lodges, the people held social dances, the women, dressed in their best gowns, ranged on one side, the men on the other; all sung, and three or four drummers furnished an accompaniment; the music was lively if somewhat jerky. At intervals the people rose and danced, the "step" being a bending of the knees and swinging of the body, the women holding their arms and hands in various graceful positions.

With the night came the rehearsal of the wondrous doings of the gods. These tales may not be told in the daytime. Old Man would not like that, and would cause any one who narrated them while it was light to become blind. All Indians are natural orators, but some far exceed others in their powers of expression. Their attitudes, gestures, and signs are so suggestive that they alone would enable one to

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

individuals and small groups. The cows were in prime condition and the Blackfeet concentrated on gathering the meat and berries to be dried and stored for winter use.

The most common technique for hunting buffalo during the late nineteenth century was the chase in which mounted hunters followed the herd and each man selected an animal, rode it down and killed it. By this time the Piegan had abandoned the earlier method of driving the herds into confining canyons, compounds or over a cliff to be killed and butchered below. Men hunted on foot only when they lacked a buffalo hunting horse, or when heavy snowfall made horse travel impossible. Although other animals might be hunted on foot, the horse was of major importance in hunting buffalo—the Blackfeet "staff of life."

Horses, then, were a form of production capital, and their importance led to another form of economic pursuit, the horse raid. A man could build a horse herd by buying animals from his neighbors, by having them given to him, by natural increase among his already acquired stock, or by raiding and taking horses from enemy camps. This was a dangerous but quick way to build capital, and success in such dangerous pursuits added to a person's prestige, so horse raiding became ". . . an established industry among the Blackfeet" (Grinnell 1907:244).

Labor was quite sharply divided by sex. Men were the hunters and defenders, women the collectors and manual laborers. In addition to hunting and fighting, men butchered the animals while on the hunt, made their weapons, shields, and drums, and painted designs on these. They also made pipes, horn utensils and often their own ornaments, leggings, and coats.

Women's work makes a longer list. They occasionally helped with light butchering when they accompanied a hunt, but did all butchering, preparing and preserving of meat once it had been brought to camp. Women gathered plant foods, prepared meals, made the clothing, packed, moved, and unpacked provisions and possessions, carried wood and water, cut tepee poles, put up and dismantled the tepees, made and decorated leather carrying bags (parfleches) and other containers, manufactured utensils, dressed and tanned skins and hides, made saddles and horse gear, made travois, and reared the children.

It would appear that the women did the most "work," which may be overlooking the fact that hunting, an avocation for us, was often an arduous occupation. Nonetheless, it was true that men had more time for socializing. Young men often dressed up in their paint and finest clothing, to stroll around the camp in order to be admired by the girls; and the older men spent much of their leisure time in feasting one another.

A similar division of labor and male advantage was a part of childhood. Young boys were free to play, until as they grew older they were given the task of caring for the horses. The games they played were preparation for hunting and raiding. At a much earlier age girls began to carry wood and water, do light gathering and collecting, and take lessons in the preparation of foods, clothing and in dressing hides—learning the women's work.

The Blackfeet were much concerned with personal property and had their own definition of what it entailed. Resources were unowned, food and materials

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Blackfoot Indians. Occasionally both sides mustered large forces of several hundred warriors drawn from a number of hunting bands. They gathered in summer when the food supply was sufficiently plentiful to feed a large encampment and leave a surplus to care for the women, children, and older men while the warriors were away from home. Under a war chief, the Piegan marched toward enemy country. If a sizable enemy war party was encountered, the opposing forces formed long lines facing one another, barely within arrow range. They knelt behind large rawhide shields some three feet in diameter while shooting their arrows at the enemy from their long bows, which came up to their chins. The fighting sometimes continued until darkness brought it to an end. Although warriors carried lances, knives, and clubs, they apparently made no use of these shock weapons unless one side outnumbered the other sufficiently to encourage it to close with the enemy. If the opposing forces were nearly equal, they appeared to be satisfied to fight a defensive action from behind the protection of their shields; in such a battle, casualties were few, and the fighting usually ended in an indecisive stalemate at day's end.[12]

More destructive and probably more typical of warfare in dog days was the surprise attack on a small hunting camp by a superior enemy force. In these actions casualties were heavy as the defenders fought desperately for their lives. Sometimes the men were wiped out, their scalps taken as trophies of war, and their children and women led into captivity by the victorious attackers. Captive women and children helped to replace previous losses on the side of the victors. Probably the women were taken as wives by enemy men, and they continued to perform much the same duties they had performed in their own camps, while the children were adopted into the alien tribe.

There is no denying it—a Blackfoot woman's life was hard in dog days. Not only did she bear and rear her children, prepare and cook the family meals, dress the hides of buffalo and other animals, make the tipi, the family clothing, and her domestic

[12] Thompson, *Narrative*, 328-32.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

tools and utensils, but she was also responsible for the movement of the camp equipment. She dismantled the tipi, caught the reluctant dogs and tackled them to the travois, loaded the travois, and kept the lively dogs in line on the march. Often she carried heavy loads on her own back. At the end of a hard day's journey she could not rest until she had pitched the tipi and fed the family. Furthermore, as indicated above, women rendered active assistance in the co-operative buffalo hunt. In this toilsome life youthful beauty was short lived, and there was little comfort in old age. When they became bent with age and too feeble to follow the moving camp on foot, they were abandoned to face death alone.

Men were hunters, warriors, and craftsmen who made their weapons and their ceremonial and religious equipment. In dog days, when swiftness of foot and physical stamina were decided assets, young men must have been proud to have had the reputation of being good runners who could overtake a buffalo or an enemy on foot. Individuals who achieved outstanding war records, or who possessed powers to call the buffalo or heal the sick, must have enjoyed a distinction among their fellows denied the average man.

Probably many religious beliefs widely held by the forest Algonkian tribes survived among the Blackfeet in dog days. Undoubtedly they shared with the forest tribes a basic belief in the ability of supernatural birds or animals to communicate some of their sacred power to young men who actively sought it through prayers and fasting. This power, they believed, would aid and protect its human beneficiary throughout his life. Men who received power from the same animal, such as the bear, beaver, or buffalo, formed cults and performed ceremonies they believed were sacred to that animal. Perhaps the most important of these animal cults in dog days was that of the beaver, for it was the beaver medicine men whose rituals charmed the buffalo into the corral and brought food to their people in time of need.[13]

[13] Clark Wissler, "Ceremonial Bundles of the Blackfoot Indians," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. VII, Part 2 (1912), 282. Wissler considered the beaver ceremonies the oldest of the many Blackfoot bundle rituals.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

532 386 Blackfoot painters used both native and trade pigments. Their own colors were mostly mineral ones. Several reds were obtained from colored earths or crushed rock. By baking a gray or yellowish clay over ashes, they obtained a reddish brown. The spring buds of pussy willows provided another red. Yellow was a colored earth commonly found in the valley of the Yellowstone River. Buffalo gallstones furnished another yellow. White was an earth, and black was either earth or charcoal. Although the Blackfeet knew how to obtain a blue from dried duck dung and a green from plants growing near lakes, they preferred the blue and green from the trading posts.

Pigments were ground to a powder in small stone mortars, stored in little buckskin sacks, and mixed with hot water or glue extracted from boiled beaver tail or the underscrapings of a hide. 532 413 Paint brushes were pieces of porous bone cut from the edge of a buffalo shoulder blade or hipbone. Their honeycomb composition held the paint and permitted it to flow smoothly onto the surface of rawhide or soft skin. Outlines were drawn with sharp-pointed brushes. Colors were spread over larger areas with the sides of the same brushes or with rounded-edged ones. A separate brush was used for each color.

462 532 As a general rule women painted only geometric designs on rawhide cases, buffalo robes, and lodge linings. Men painted human or animal forms on their shields, drums, and lodge covers, and they recorded their successes at war on the inner surfaces of their buffalo robes.

532 342 The largest and most striking examples of Blackfoot Indian painting were the larger than life-size representations of animals and birds depicted on the outer surfaces of their conical lodge covers. These primitive mural paintings portrayed the creatures which the tipi owners regarded as the sources of their supernatural powers. [787] Each was painted in strict accordance with the instructions the owner received in the vision or dream in which he obtained his power. The lodge owner called upon a man who was known to be a skilled painter. He told the artist what creatures to portray and where to locate them on the cover. The

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

plained, "My parents had several children before I was born. All of them died. When I was a baby, my mother cut off this finger and gave it to the sun so that I might live and enjoy long life. That I have done."

In the medicine lodge at sun dance time each of the men's societies danced and presented gifts to the sun. The varied ceremonies in the medicine lodge usually consumed four or more days. The lodge itself was left standing when the great camp broke up and the several hunting bands went their separate ways for the fall hunt.

Like other peoples, the Blackfoot Indians employed simple home remedies for minor ailments, but when someone was seriously ill they called upon a man or woman who had magic powers with which to cure the sick. The Blackfeet believed disease was caused by an evil spirit entering a person's body and that it could be cured by a doctor who possessed the power to expell the spirit. As Blackfoot doctors received their detailed instructions for curing the sick in dreams, their methods differed. Many, however, employed singing, drumming, and calling upon their supernatural helper for assistance. Not uncommonly, the doctor appeared to extract some small object from the sick person's body as proof that the cause of illness had been removed. Some doctors were specialists in treating broken bones, snake bites, or battle wounds. Many of the most renowned doctors were women. It was customary to pay the doctor one or more horses for his services. The family of a victim of a prolonged illness might give all their possessions to the Indian doctor.

The Blackfoot Indians believed that after death the soul traveled to the Sand Hills, a desolate country south of the Saskatchewan River. There the deceased entered upon a new life similar to the one he or she had lived on earth. The dead were invisible to the living. Nevertheless, Indians who traveled through the lonely sand hill country claimed they heard strange noises and saw the trails and deserted camp circles of the dead. The Blackfeet claimed that the ghosts of the dead sometimes returned to communicate with the living in weird, whistling sounds.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

RIDING GEAR

MAKING OF RAWHIDE ROPE

Rawhide rope had many uses in Blackfoot horse culture. The strength, flexibility, and durability of buffalo rawhide made it preferred material for lariats, hackamores, bridles, picket lines, hobbles, saddle rigging straps, stirrup straps, travois ropes, and cords used for wrapping bundles and tying them on pack animals or the travois.

Women were the skilled leatherworkers among the Blackfoot. Although some men made rawhide rope, our older male informants acknowledged that in their youth women usually fashioned the best ropes. The tough, heavy hide of the buffalo bull was preferred material.

Three Calf recalled that his grandmother and mother, both considered clever workers in rawhide, made rawhide rope in this manner: The woman first cut one long, continuous strip from the green hide of a buffalo bull. Beginning at the outer edge, she cut a strip about 4 fingers wide all around the hide, including the leg and head projections, working in a concentric spiral, ending at the center of the hide. Then she cut a slit near one end of the strip and drove a lodge peg through this slit into the ground. She stretched the rope as tight as possible and drove another peg into the ground through a similar slit at the other end of the line. Later she pulled up one peg, stretched the strip farther, and pegged it to the ground again. After the rawhide dried, she took it off her simple stretcher and began softening it by rubbing the inner (meat side) surface of the hide with a rock. Then she doubled the strip lengthwise, hair side out, and bit it with her teeth to hold the crease. She passed one end of the strip through the eye sockets of a buffalo skull, and standing with one foot on the skull to steady it, she used both hands to saw the strip back and forth through these eye holes to rub off the hair and further soften the hide. She knocked off any hair that remained with a rock. Taking her knife again she cut the strip down the center lengthwise, dividing it into two ropes each 2 fingers wide. If these ropes were intended for bridles she allowed for a short distance of rope 4 fingers wide at each end, one end for one rope, the other for the second rope, to serve as a honda for each. She trimmed each rope very carefully to be sure that it was an even width throughout its length, except for the expanded honda end. Any short pieces trimmed off were saved for whip

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

SADDLES

SADDLE MAKING

Saddle making was women's work among the Blackfoot. It was a somewhat specialized craft. Some older women who were especially skilled saddlemakers not only manufactured them for the members of their own families but also made them for trade, while other women never attempted to make saddles.[46]

Saddle making was not strictly a seasonal occupation, but Blackfoot women generally preferred to fashion them in warmer weather because of the inconvenience of working wet rawhide in winter. To a limited extent saddles were tailor-made. If the person for whom the saddle was intended was a large, heavy man or woman, the pommel and cantle were spaced a greater distance apart than was usual in frame saddles. Saddles made for children were proportionately smaller than those for adults.[47]

Saddles were highly valued, private property. A good horse was paid for with a fancy pad saddle or a high-horned woman's saddle. When a couple married their parents might give them saddles. However, some poor families owned no saddles. If a young man was ambitious, wanted to hunt and go to war, his father or another close relative had a saddle made for him. A lazy young man of poor family might never own a saddle.

At night, or in the daytime when not in use, saddles were stored inside the owner's lodge behind the beds. If a man had several wives it generally was the duty of the one who slept nearest the door to care for his saddle and other riding gear left in the lodge.

The several types of pad and frame saddles used by the Blackfoot in buffalo days were as follows:

THE PAD SADDLE

An active man's saddle, which was little more than a soft, skin pillow stuffed with hair, was known as "pad saddle." To make a pad saddle two pieces of soft tanned buffalo, deer, elk or antelope skin were cut to the same size, roughly hourglass-shaped in outline. Buffalo bull skin made the longest wearing pad saddle. Although a man might cut the pattern to suit his desire, he turned the skins over to a woman to as-

[46] Women were also the saddlemakers among the Wind River Shoshoni and Kiowa (Shimkin, 1947 b, p. 294; communication from Alice Marriott). Some Kiowa women were specialists to the extent that they made and traded saddles for lodge covers, dried meat, and other articles. However, Opler (1941, p. 395) found that men made the saddles of the Chiricahua Apache.

[47] The collections of the U. S. National Museum contain several small frame saddles from different Plains Indian tribes, documented as children's saddles. Kiowa informants said older women of that tribe made saddles for boys and girls.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

HORSE TRAVOIS CONSTRUCTION

Wissler (1910, pp. 88–91, fig. 56) has described and figured the Blackfoot dog travois, made with ladder or net type loading platform. Informants claimed the ladder-type platform was preferred for both dog and horse travois by the Blackfoot. They considered the netted platform a Cree type. The dog and horse travois differed primarily in size, apex construction, and the hitch.

Among the Blackfoot the horse travois was made and owned by women. If a man had several wives, all worked together in making travois. Generally each family made its own. However, the wealthy husband of a woman who was not skilled at this work would get her one in trade. He might give a horse for a travois. Poorer people would pay no more than 4 robes.

The travois was made entirely of wood and rawhide. Figure 18 illustrates the construction, and the travois in place on the horse's back. The shafts (*a* and *a'*) were two stout poles of lodgepole pine. Generally they were obtained from the eastern slope of the Rockies or from the Bear Paw Mountains. They were generally about 4 to 5 inches in diameter at the base, a little larger than lodgepoles, although the Blackfoot referred to these shafts as "lodgepoles." Usually the shafts were made a little longer than necessary to allow for shortening through wear at the base. However, Weasel Tail said the travois would ride better if the distance forward of the tie (*b*) was relatively short. Shafts with long frontal projections (over 3 feet beyond the tie) had little spring. The tie (*b*) generally was made with a wet tendon from the back of the buffalo's neck wrapped with soft-tanned skin rope. The hitch was composed of a flat strip of rawhide (*c*) about 4 fingers wide. Each end of this strip was wrapped under and around one of the shafts, doubled back upon itself and sewn with rawhide cord. Through transverse slits in the center of this rawhide piece was passed a long rawhide line about 2 fingers wide (*d*). One end of this line was carefully and tightly wrapped around each shaft as far down as the bottom edge of the loading platform, where these lines were tied, leaving sufficient length of line to permit the ends to be used for tying the load on the platform. This rawhide line played an important role in the construction of the travois. Actually it carried the weight of the pull in transport and also kept the shafts from splitting. Three Calf pointed out that one could tell the maker's pride in craftsmanship by examining her pole wrapping line. If she had been careful to remove all the buffalo hair from the rawhide with a rock, if she had made the line in one continuous strip, and if she had cut it an even width throughout its length, she was a skilled craftsman. However, if she left bits of buffalo hair clinging to the surface, if she cut the line in uneven width, or if she had tied two or more lines to-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 105]

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

move was to be made so that everyone would be in readiness to make an early start the next morning.[169]

In planning the movement of a Blackfoot band, the band chief consulted other prominent men of the band before announcing the move. He called upon certain individuals in the band to act as scouts, side, and rear guards.

Among the Blackfoot the medicine pipe owner played an important role in camp movement. In dismantling his lodge on the morning of the move he placed his bundle at some distance from it if the move was to be a long one; he left it standing on its tripod near the lodge if the move was to be a short one. He took pains to point his pipe in the direction the camp was to go. Before he set out, the medicine pipe owner made a smudge and prayed for the safe journey of the camp, that no accident would befall any member and that no enemies would be encountered en route. The medicine pipe man led the main body when camp moved."

PACKING UP

Experience made the Blackfoot efficient in packing their belongings quickly on the morning camp was to move. Except for the lodge and bedding most items were packed ready for transportation before the morning of the move. They needed only to be tied in their proper places on horses or travois. This greatly expedited last-minute preparations. J. M. Stanley (1855, p. 448), who accompanied Low Horn's Piegan village of 90 lodges on its move southward to Fort Benton in the fall of 1853, wrote that "in less than an hour the whole camp was under way".[171]

As among other Plains Indian tribes Blackfoot packing of lodges and furnishings was women's work. In a household of several wives the husband's favorite wife served as job foreman, supervising the work of the other wives, the aged women, and grown girls of the

[169] Larocque's description of movements of the entire Crow camp in the summer of 1805, reveals that Crow custom was similar to that described by living Blackfoot informants, at that early date. He observed that the principal chief consulted the other chiefs before deciding upon a move, then issued the order. That chief's lodge was the first to be taken down on the morning of the move (Larocque, 1910). Tixier (1940, p. 179) noted that heralds announced breaking of camp the night before the Osage hunting camp made a move during the summer of 1840. As early as 1776, the elder Henry (1809, p. 316) observed the Assiniboin chief's practice of notifying the camp of the next day's march in advance. My Kiowa informants stated that in that tribe the principal chief's decision was made known to tribal members through his announcer the night before camp movement, and that this chief led the procession when camp was under way.

[170] Perhaps the Mandan and Hidatsa had a very similar custom. Alexander Henry (1897, vol. 1, p. 369), who accompanied these tribes on a visit to the Cheyenne in 1806, observed that Le Borgne's "grand pipe of ceremony" was carried at the head of the procession. Boller (1868, p. 277) noted that Poor Wolf "carried the pipe" and led the line of march when the Mandan-Hidatsa moved camp ca. 1860.

[171] Denig (1953, p. 86) credited the Crow with being able to pack and start on the march in "less than 20 minutes."

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Boller (1868, pp. 124–125) was a member of a camp of Hidatsa which traveled on a visit to the Assiniboin in the sixties. He observed that one of the party was an old, lame Assiniboin returning to his people. He "had one horse and a travee, upon which his three children and all his worldly goods were transported. His squaw led the wretched animal" while the old man walked in the rear. They were finally left behind the rest of the moving camp and did not catch up until the day after the others had reached their destination. Boller noted that a squaw with three small children was also left; she carried one on her back and another in her arms, while the eldest trotted along by her side. Some time after, a young Indian who had loitered behind came up and reported that the squaw had just killed the youngest "because it was too small to travel."

Abandonment of the aged poor was common practice among many of the nomadic tribes of the Upper Missouri (Denig, 1930, pp. 576–577). However, both Denig (1953, p. 38) and Larocque (1910, p. 57) claimed the Crow were a notable exception to this rule. Both writers credited the Crow custom of transporting the aged when camp was moved to their relative wealth in horses. Among the Pawnee (Dunbar, 1880, p. 328), Osage (Tixier, 1940, p. 140), and Sauk and Fox (Forsyth in Blair, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 233–234), the aged and the poor were left behind when the great majority of their tribesmen embarked on prolonged buffalo hunts on horseback. Of the Plains Indian tribes in general it may be safely stated that the aged were the first to suffer from a shortage of horses.

Next to suffer were the women. There can be no doubt that the horse proved a great boon to women. The transport horse replaced the pedestrian woman burden bearer as well as the dog travois. The statements quoted below support and underscore Phillip St. George Cooke's generalization regarding the Plains Indians. "The husband strives to obtain wealth in horses to relieve his family of travelling on foot and carrying burdens" (Cooke, 1857, p. 117).[88]

[88] La Vérendrye noted that "the women and dogs carry all the baggage" among the horseless Assiniboin whom he accompanied to visit the Mandan in 1738 (La Vérendrye, 1927, p. 317). Later traders who met horse-using tribes of the western Plains commented on the improvement in the status of women due to possession of horses. In 1772 Cocking (1908, p. 111) stated that the Gros Ventres "use pack-Horses, which give their Women a great advantage over other Women who are either carrying or hauling sledges every day in the year." Of the Crow, in 1805, Larocque (1910, p. 39) said, "The women are indebted solely to their having horses for the ease they enjoy more than their neighbors." Bourgmont, in 1724, noted the heavy loads carried by Kansa women as well as their dogs and said they had difficulty marching because of the weight of their baggage. At the Padouca (Apache) village a Skidi Pawnee chief told Bourgmont he was eager to make peace with the Padouca "to obtain horses which will help us to carry our belongings when we move to our winter grounds, because our wives and children die under the burden when

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

FORMATIONS ON THE MARCH

John Mix Stanley (1855, pp. 448–449) observed that Low Horn's Piegan village of 90 lodges en route to Fort Benton in September 1853, was "drawn out in two parallel lines on the plains." The "chiefs and braves rode in front, flank and rear, ever ready for the chase or defense against the foe." Informants claimed the use of advance guards scouting for signs of game and the enemy, and of side and rear pickets was common in the movement of tribal and band camps among Blackfoot tribes in their youth. Scouts sometimes traveled as far as 3 miles ahead of the main body, and flanking and rear guards sometimes were nearly as far distant from it. Scouts ascended hills and rising ground the better to look out for game and foes. The main body was led by the medicine pipe man and the chief or chiefs with their families. Other camp members fell in behind them in family groups (including travois, pack animals, riding animals, and loose horses). Sometimes the main body moved in single file, at other times with two or more families abreast, depending to some extent on the character of the country traversed. Men not assigned to guard duty traveled with their families and assisted the women in retrieving any baggage that might become untied and fall to the ground. Not infrequently lodgepoles wore through their suspension holes and had to be retied.

However, Weasel Tail stated that the ideal formation was not always employed in band movements. Sometimes, when the band felt secure from enemy attack, the side pickets were eliminated. The history of Blackfoot warfare, however, suggests that it was at such times the enemy sometimes attacked with disastrous losses to the defenders. Brings-Down-the-Sun, the North Piegan chief, told McClintock (1910, p. 473 ff.) of a case when the camp was protected by front and rear guards only while passing through hilly country. The Crow Indians attacked on the unprotected flanks and killed or captured many Piegan. On another occasion the Crow suffered a serious defeat

---

we return" (Margry, 1876–86, vol. 6, pp. 414, 425). Forsyth (in Blair, vol. 2, p. 236) said of the Sauk and Fox in 1827, "if any carrying is obliged to be done for want of horses, the women have to shoulder it." Omaha women (in 1819) loaded their horses and dogs, then took "as great a weight upon their own backs as they can conveniently transport." Among the horse-poor Omaha at that time "the greater portion of the young men and squaws were necessarily pedestrian" (James, 1823, vol. 1, p. 205). In 1834 Zenas Leonard visited a horseless "Bannock" village which journeyed to the Plains once a year to hunt buffalo, where they remained "until they jerk as much meat as their females can lug home on their backs" (Leonard, 1904, p. 148). Miller's watercolor of Pawnee Indians moving camp (1837) portrays a number of women carrying heavy loads on their backs, as well as loaded horses and dog travois (Ross, 1951, p. 66). The Pawnee, of course, were poor in horses.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

231 the trimming with dirt and water, and rubbing the strong-odored concoction on the noses of both animals. Other owners mixed some manure of the gentle mare with grass and rubbed it on the nose of the new horse. Then in a couple of days the two animals would stay together without tying. This treatment also was employed to accustom a horse obtained as a gift or in trade to the new owner's herd.[171]

WOMEN ON HORSE-RAIDING EXPEDITIONS

701 462 It was not uncommon for a childless young woman to accompany her husband on a horse raid. Weasel Tail explained, "My wife said she loved me, and if I was to be killed on a war party she wanted to be killed too. I took her with me on five raids. Some of them I led, and my wife was not required to perform the cooking or other chores. She carried a six-shooter. On one occasion she stole a horse with a saddle, ammunition bag and war club." He recalled three married women who had taken guns from the enemy while on war parties with their husbands. Two of these women were Piegan, one Blood. Elk-Hollering-in-the-Water, a short woman of very slight build, told me she had taken objects from the enemy while on raiding parties with her husband, Bear Chief, a Piegan. The most famous Piegan woman warrior of the 19th century was Running Eagle, subject of J. Willard Schultz' book, "Running Eagle the Warrior Girl" (1919). She was known to some of my informants as a leader of many successful horse raids who was killed while attempting to take horses from the Flathead.[172]

BOYS ON HORSE-RAIDING EXPEDITIONS

702 888 James Doty (1854, p. 7), in a brief description of Blackfoot horse raiding, written a century ago, stated, "In one of these parties are generally found 3 or 4 young men, or mere boys, who are apprentices. They go without the expectation of receiving a horse, carry extra moccasins and tobacco for the party, do all the camp drudgery, and consider themselves amply paid in being permitted to learn the science of horse stealing from such experienced hands." According to informants these boys were 14 or 15 years of age. Younger boys were considered too great a risk. They might, through carelessness, endanger the lives of the entire party. The boys performed the duties

[171] [171] The Puyallup-Nisqually introduced a new horse into a herd by dampening "scales from above the first joint of its leg" and rubbing on the leg of a horse to which it was tied for the night. "After that the new horse would not wander" (Smith, 1940, p. 98). I have found no comparative data on this point from other tribes.

[172] [172] Denig (1953, pp. 64–68) has recorded the biography of Woman Chief, the outstanding woman warrior of the Upper Missouri. Gros Ventres by birth, she was captured by the Crow as a child. She led a number of successful Crow war parties before she was killed while on a visit to her own people, the Gros Ventres, in the early 1850's.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

In 1808, Henry wrote in his journal, "The women appear to be held in slavery and stand in awe of their husbands."[179] Their work, was indeed hard and long. They cooked the meals, treated the skins, sewed them into clothing and tipi coverings, raised and lowered these cumbersome shelters, and saw to the transportation of family goods on the march. "The young men," again comments Henry, "appear proud and haughty, and are particular to keep their garments and robes clean. The women are a filthy set."[180]

Yet even in this hunting and raiding society of the past, women enjoyed a comparatively strong position—and this despite their onerous duties, the payment of a bride price, the continual suspicion and accusation of adultery, the harsh punishment for a breach of fidelity.[181] For in those not too distant days, a woman could lead a war party; she could be designated a favorite; she could own property, receive and exercise medicine power, and give names. She was a necessary part of every ceremonial transfer; she was the custodian of the bundles that her husband bought. The public initiation of the Horn Society still dramatizes the man's dependence. It is the wife who receives the power from the seller. Her husband can only gain possession from her.

Above and beyond the pressure of the reserve, the Blood woman has maintained this early importance. Although differently expressed, she is today, as she was in the past, a valuable asset. Her tanning and bead-work make a great show on ceremonial occasions; she runs her husband's home and participates in his transactions; she keeps her earnings and has considerable say about his; she chooses her partner in the social dance; she is still a necessary adjunct to his ceremonial life. Undeterred by the threat of punishment, she accepts flirtatious advances and often initiates them. She is secure in her womanhood.

But like the man, it is the rich woman in particular, although sometimes the beautiful one, who is arrogantly sure of herself. A rich woman is spoiled and demanding. A beautiful one will not hesitate to take another woman's husband or flaunt her lover before her own when he cannot satisfy her with handsome clothes. Rich or poor, she may leave her husband at will; but the fathers of the poor are apt to urge their daughters to remain, while fathers of the rich have frequently been known to take them home "because their husbands didn't treat them right."[182]

---

[179] Henry and Thompson, *Journals*, p. 526.

[180] *Ibid.*, p. 525.

[181] *Ibid.*, p. 572. Cf. also Maximilian, *Travels*, p. 253; Bradley, *Characteristics*, p. 271; and Wissler, *Social Life*, p. 10 ff.

[182] *Ibid.* Wissler quotes a Piegan as saying, ". . .If a man who gives a few presents or pays nothing becomes exacting, the woman's relatives will remark that as he paid little or nothing he should desist; they may even take her away and find another husband for her."

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

In the beginning, hay was cut for the ration house. In 1892 the first hay harvest was reported, 162 tons, enough to winter the cattle that always had to be on hand for rations. A few years later hay cutting became an acknowledged occupation. A rancher, applying to the agent, would hire a chief and his followers to camp near his corral and cut hay for his cattle. With scythes, rakes, and forks the gang made stack after stack, paid richly with a steer's carcass for each stack. In the fall, when these gangs returned to the reserve, their parfleches were filled to the brim. In 1898, the agent, G. H. Wheatley, reporting signs of progress, spoke of Weasel Calf, Running Rabbit, and others as having bought mowers and horse rakes.

With the harvesting of hay well under way, it was deemed that the time had come to introduce cattle to the Indians. Accordingly a trial balloon was launched by way of an arrangement to exchange cattle for horses with any Indian who wished them. The farm instructor was to show the individual families how to care for these beasts.

Little did the agent appreciate the ramifications of this move. Crowfoot, though willing in starvation days to accept cattle, changed his mind after having enjoyed the pleasant security of rations, and opined that cattle spelled the end of this security. This attitude was so prevalent that when cattle were offered, the old cry of white versus Indian ways renewed itself. Rumour had it that once cattle were established, rations would be abolished and the Blackfoot would be moved north from their ancient habitat to fend for themselves in the bush country. People set their jaws to resist, so that when fourteen traitors traded horses for cattle in 1895, an uproar broke loose. Common folk who took them were sometimes driven from the band village. Brothers who had camped side by side for years moved apart with bitter words. The eminent ceremonialist Calf Child was shunned by his friends. Even such a prominent man as Calf Bull, though untouchable by dint of his wealth and prestige, was widely criticized.

At first many of these deviants managed to live in the band villages as before, their cattle safe in the corrals of the farm instructors. Through the year they cut hay for their own stock, learned to wean cattle, and acquired skill in husbandry. A year or two later some of these people, anxious to move out of earshot of their carping neighbours, set up separate establishments with their own cattle out on the prairie. They built rough corrals in which to house the

796 824 [178] [237] Society rituals was traditionally made from two incense tongs, but recently two poles crossed at right angles have been used. Eagle feathers and cloth are attached at the top. The sage is tied at both ends of the arms and at the center, where the poles cross (Fig. 12), balls of sage are also used to cleanse the body during participation in the All Smoking Ceremony.

[782] In the Okan (Holy Lodge) of the Sun Dance the Lodge dancers wore sage around their wrists and ankles---as though they were themselves offerings.

[785] [302] Among the Peigan, one man fasted until the Okan center pole was raised; then he entered a sweat lodge and used sage to wipe off the black paint with which he had been covered. In early times sage was used as a bed for the Buffalo Stones (Iniskim) during buffalo drive rituals.

[823] [715] [773] It seems that the proper way to dispose of the sage was to throw it eastward rather than burn it or just put it down. There were other uses of course. A person afraid of a ghost would cleanse himself with sage. A man who was going to enter a horse race might do the same. There does not appear to be an origin myth for this plant.

SASKATOON

Amelanchier alnifolia Nutt

824 796 262 The saskatoon (Fig. 13) is a well known bush of the river bottoms and coulee slopes. Its berries make preserves and tasty snacks. They were included in Blackfoot ritual meals. A berry soup accompanied most ceremonial events, such as the transfer of a tipi design or the opening [462] of a Medicine Pipe bundle or a Beaver bundle. The woman prepared the soup from saskatoon berries, assorted roots, fat, and water. At an appointed [782] time during the ceremony this soup was served to all participants. The soup was blessed, and an offering of one of the berries was put back into the ground, before eating began. A few mouthfuls were taken; then the

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29)

Part III

PLANTS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF SICKNESS

Overview

755 [757] The Blackfoot practised two kinds of medicine, one of which was distinguished by its reliance on divination. The other consisted of common remedies which were available to all.

[462] [791] [756] There was a general procedure in the divination of disease and there is evidence to show that there were as many women diviners as men. (Although it is common practice among anthropologists to denote this kind of ritual curing as shamanism, we take exception to that in using the term divination, as we believe that shamanism as practised in the Tibetan sense, does not apply to the medical treatment of the Plains Indians).

787 [785] In order to obtain power for the purpose of curing an individual would undertake a vision quest which involved prolonged isolation and fasting. [776] [778] If the quest was successful, the source of power, usually a spiritual being in animal form would instruct him in the songs, ritual and construction [554] of the curing bundle. There are many variations of the titles of men who have received power, a common one among the Blood Indians is "natoosi - inaipi" or "sun comes down" another given to us by C.B. Grinell was used among the south Peigans, "i-so-kin-ub-kin" or "heavy singer for the sick".

756 422 778 124 These bundles remained the personal property of the diviner and could not be transferred. Indeed, the source of power was not to be revealed to anyone. We have only been able to obtain an account of this vision quest from one diviner who has stopped practising. Other informants have given important information of the patterns of divining disease but have with-held their own source of power.

[p.62]

Part V

PLANTS USED IN BLACKFOOT DIET

Overview

262 824 126 177 The Blackfoot used a variety of plants in their diet. Although we recorded uses for 45 species, there were probably more before the introduction of commercial food stores. Only a few plants are used today, usually as a supplement to purchased foods.

262 222 [462] [412] [293] Roots and berries were the staple items. Women did the harvesting, sometimes assisted by their children. Roots were unearthed with a chokecherry digging stick (Fig. 29). Some women wore a wide belt of rawhide which they used for protection and support while pushing against the stick. Sometimes, though, roots were obtained by opening the underground dens of a [251] [237] small mammal and robbing their supplies. If the roots were not used immediately in soups or stews, they were usually sliced, strung on a thong, dried, then greased with back or kidney fat and stored in a fetal fawnskin or sheepskin bag (Fig. 30).

222 237 251 Berries, which were harvested from mid-July, were handpicked or shook from their branches onto a wide hide (Figs. 31 & 32). The hide was usually perforated with small holes which allowed air to pass through it and the berries. For making supplies the hide was raised off the ground and its burden sun-dried. The women turned the berries every few hours, discarding ones of poor quality. Then the berries were greased and stored in the fetal [264] bags. Fresh berries were simply eaten on the spot except with Prunus and [412] Almanchier, which were often crushed with stone mauls, and mixed with backfat and dried meat, the method of preparing pemmican.

000 The leaves and some roots of various plants served to spice the stews

 [TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 99]

824 262 251 Geranium viscosissimum

The leaves, which are quite pungent, were kept in food storage bags in order to mask the spoiling of their contents.

Heracleum lanatum

The stem of the young plant was peeled and eaten like celery. Women [462] [251] cut the stem into small pieces which were dipped in blood and stored until their use in soup and broths.

Lilium philadelphicum

As with Erythronium and Fritillaria, the bulb was eaten fresh or with [192] soup. The bulb of this plant (and by association the other two) is referred to as "bee's tooth" because it breaks into small, rice-like kernals when it is rubbed, imaginary bee teeth.

Lomatium triternatum

The flowers of "stands alone" or "many standing" were sometimes mixed with pemmican.

Mammilaria vivipara

The fruits of these "wild figs" were eaten as a confection.

Mentha arvensis

[272] The plant was bound in bunches, dried and used to make a delicious tea of spice pemmican and soups.

Osmorhiza occidentalis

The root of "small mouth", which is quite sweet, was chewed as a confection, especially during the winter.

Perideridia gairdneri

The roots of "double turnip", another staple, were eaten fresh or saved for use in soups, etc. Children often made snacks of them while playing on the prairie.

824 262 [261] Physaria didymocarpa

A person who had not eaten for a long time would drink a decoction of the plant slowly. This would expand his stomach gradually until he could eat a normal amount without pain.

Pinus contorta

261 The pitch was chewed like gum.

Populus tremuloides

The cambium of aspen was eaten. Children especially would snack on it. Anyone observing a liquid taboo was allowed to suck a piece of the bark.

Potentilla fruticosa

263 The leaves were mixed with dried meat as a deodorant and spice.

Prunus virginiana

[222] [462] [251] [237] Women collected the ripe berries, another staple, and divided them into those to be preserved whole and those to be crushed. The ones for storage were greased and dried in the sun, then put away in the fawn-skin bags. The others were crushed on a stone and mixed with backfat for pemmican or [272] added to soups, etc. The juice from the crushing was given as a special drink to husbands or the favorite child.

[263] 252 Choke-cherry sticks were gathered, stripped of their bark and inserted into roasting meat for spice.

Psoralea esculenta

[462] [412] Women dug the root with choke-cherry sticks. Then it was either peeled and eaten fresh or dried and added to winter supplies.

Ribes oxyacanthoides

"Punctured berries", a wild currant, were eaten fresh or added to soups, etc. They were not saved for winter use.

824 524 [401] flowerhead of "gumweed" (probably Grindelia squarrosa). The stem[4] was filled with water, the top end plugged in the same way and a stick was fitted into the bottom to afford a piston-like action for squirting the water out the far end. The child used his squirt-gun to kill crickets and such, after which he declared that he had "killed his meat".

[158] Infirm people would use the stems to suck soup and stew without raising up.

824 Hierchloe odorata

Saddles were packed with this grass (as well as sage) to keep them smelling good.

Juniperus spp.

[462] [237] Women collected quantities of the berry, inserted small sticks through them, and dried them. Then grease was poured over campfire coals and the [301] [237] [294] berries held in the thick smoke which turned them black. The berries were polished and strung on rawhide thongs for necklaces, wristlets, or clothing decorations. Sometimes they were interspersed with Elaegnus berries.

[281] Hides were yellowed in the smoke of the greased leaves.

"Kah-pook-sss"

824 435 276 This wood was sought in the making of pipestems and was considered very valuable because it was obtained only after hazardous travel into the Big Horn River country. A horse and several blankets might be paid for a single piece suitable for one pipestem. Pipe tamps were made of the same wood.

824 524 793 Lithospernum ruderale

Children nicknamed this plant "holy turnip" and used the stems as headpieces in their play, probably mimicking the affairs of the Holy Woman who owned the Natoas Bundle.

4./The stem of Heracleum lanatum--Analyst/

237 and quivers. The back sinews were used for thread and string and, attached with glue made from the hooves, as a backing

412

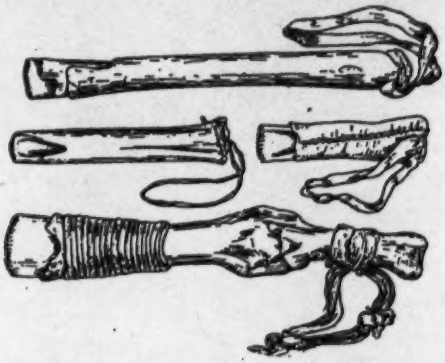


FIG. 16. BLACKFOOT TOOLS FOR FLESHING HIDES
(*After Wissler*)

for the wooden bows to give greater strength and elasticity. 321 The horns were softened by boiling and shaped into spoons 281 and ladles, and the bones fashioned into tools for the dressing 412 of hides.

412

FIG. 17. BLACKFOOT HIDE SCRAPERS
LENGTH OF *A*, 35 CM.
(*After Wissler*)

281 The Plains Indians hunted more continuously and ener-
462 getically than the Paiute, and, unlike them, left the dressing
171 of the skins to women, whose more restricted gathering activities left them more leisure for this work.
[of the buffalo.—Analyst]

19: Forde E-4 (no date) 1952 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

abundant meat-supply after a successful hunt, there was opportunity to devise means for storing large quantities. After a hunt the store of meat was cut into thin strips and dried in the sun on wooden frames. When dry the meat was slightly roasted, pounded to a mince, mixed with fat and then packed and sealed with a covering of tallow in large bags or parfleches that in later times often contained a hundred pounds each and consumed the meat of two buffaloes. This is the pemmican so well known from the accounts of early explorers and traders. The finest pemmican was made from the choicest cuts pounded and mixed with marrow fat and dried berries. Large stone-lined pits were built near the winter camp in which these food-supplies could be stored, secure from the attacks of carnivores and rodents.

While meat was the main food of the Blackfoot and other Plains tribes, wild roots and berries were not neglected, and a considerable variety was gathered by the women during the year. The various harvests often controlled the precise location of the camp. In the spring a valuable root, known as *pomme blanche* to white trappers, was obtained in large quantities with digging sticks. In the country nearest the Rockies the camas bulb, a food staple among the northern Plateau peoples, was obtained in summer. Several kinds of berry and the wild choke-cherry were harvested in the autumn. The surplus was in each case dried and stored or mixed in the pemmican.

Tobacco

Although the Blackfoot depended entirely on natural products for their food they did, like many other Plains tribes and other hunting peoples, cultivate one plant—tobacco. A plot of ground near the winter camp was cleared and the soil raked over early each spring and the tobacco seeds planted ceremonially by a party of men. The plot was visited occasionally by one or two men during the summer, who had to make long journeys for the purpose and bring back samples of the growing plant. The crop was gathered when the camp returned to winter quarters in the autumn. This tobacco smoked in pipes of soft and easily worked stone played a very important part in Blackfoot and all Plains ceremonial. Although the plant was very hardy and grew with so little care, it had to be sown afresh each year to maintain the supply. The significance of tobacco planting among the Blackfoot and other western peoples in North America is considered later (see p. 255).

Transport

The migration of the individual camp groups and of the tribes as a whole involved frequent transport of the entire household. The dwellings and utensils of the Blackfoot were mostly of a light and portable character, but, although they

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood
Sarsi NF9

even know he was sick, but it turned out he had cancer. In the earlier days they called cancer the "big boil," or "big pimple," and they had a cure for it. I don't know which root they used, but my grandmother knew all the roots and herbs real well. In the old days they didn't have much sickness or disease, except what they caught from the traders, and then when they started going to the boarding schools. I sure wish I could go back to those old days again.

A GRANDMOTHER WHO WENT ON WAR RAIDS

My father's father was born too late to go on war raids, but his oldest sister wasn't. Her name was Hate Woman, and she was the only wife of a notorious warrior named Weasel Tail. Among his exploits in life he once laid down in the trail of a grizzly bear and, when it stood over him and began to paw him around, he jumped up and stabbed it in the heart with a huge knife. As a boy he spent some years living among the Crow people, who were our most respected enemies. He died about the same time as his wife, in 1950, at the age of ninety-one.

Weasel Tail went on his first war raids as a teenager, before he had married his wife. It was a custom for members of a war party to meet in front of their leader's lodge for a dance and some songs of encouragement. Often each member sang his own songs, with words of special messages for their girl friends and wives. Weasel Tail later said that one of his early songs included the words: "Girl I love, don't worry about me! I'll be eating berries coming home."

But after Weasel Tail and Hate Woman were married, she didn't often sit at home to worry about him. As he once explained: "My wife said she loved me, and if I was to be killed on a war party she wanted to be killed too. I took her

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

with me on five raids. Some of them I led, and my wife was not required to perform the cooking or other chores. She carried a six-shooter. On one occasion she stole a horse with a saddle, ammunition bag, and war club." Those were considered noteworthy exploits even among the men.

Weasel Tail's war adventures are still recounted by some of the old people today. In addition, an anthropologist spent time with him in his last years and recorded the details of his life. Unfortunately, no one asked his wife to leave her stories about the war trails that she went on, since she was the last of our women who had experiences of this kind.

One of the first war parties that Weasel Tail and Hate Woman joined together was made up of more than twenty members. They left the Blood camps and headed east, in search of Sitting Bull's Sioux, who were then exiled in Canada, after their victory over Custer. Although Sitting Bull has become a famous hero for many, he was not particularly liked or trusted by my people of the time. His presence in the country made life uncomfortable for all sides, and his warriors continually raided the neighboring tribes.

The leader of this war party was Eagle Child, who wasn't too thrilled about bringing a woman along. He kept her busy cutting meat and performing other work for the rest of his party. Another member of the party was one of her younger brothers, an uncle of my father's who was known then as Eagle Fly. When they got near the enemy camps this brother feared for the safety of his sister and tried to talk Weasel Tail into taking her back home. Finally they came in sight of one of the Sioux camps, at which point the leader and the woman's brother insisted that she wait for the rest by a grove of trees. Weasel Tail was left to wait with her.

The night went by and in the early morning Weasel Tail saw the Sioux turn their horses out of a corral in the camp. The hidden Blood warriors immediately roped some of the horses, mounted them, and drove the rest of the herd away.

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

In the excitement they forgot all about Weasel Tail and his wife.

Weasel Tail had no choice but to go to one of the other nearby camps and try to steal horses that they could ride home. He got one and brought it to his wife. He told her to mount it and wait, while he went back for another. He soon found a good one, with a feather tied in its mane and another in its tail. When he got it roped and mounted he saw another fine-looking horse nearby, so he caught it, too. He rode back to his wife and together they made their getaway. In their excitement they left behind a little bundle containing dried meat and a good knife. Fortunately there was dried meat left at one of the campsites that they had stayed in with the main party, some days before. It took them less than four days to get back home.

Probably the most exciting adventure that Weasel Tail and Hate Woman took part in got them involved with three different enemy tribes. To begin with, they joined a Blood war party heading for the Crows, with whom Weasel Tail had lived as a youngster. He knew the country well, and the group had no problem stealing a large number of Crow horses. However, on their way back home with them they encountered a war party of Crees that greatly outnumbered them. There was a fight, during which one of the Crees was shot. While the Bloods sought shelter, the rest of the Crees left, taking along all their recently captured horses.

On foot, Weasel Tail, Hate Woman, and their party headed north to find a camp of friendly Gros Ventres. By mistake they walked into a camp of very unfriendly Assiniboines. Luckily, the first person that they met in the camp was a Blood named Sliding Down, who had married an Assiniboine woman and joined her tribe. He offered to bring them to the lodge of the chief and to interpret for them. When they got inside they found the chief not very willing to accept them as friends, while the rest of the camp's people hurriedly gathered

outside and surrounded the lodge. The Bloods knew that they were in for trouble. An argument finally erupted, causing all the Bloods to jump up and aim their guns at the chief. Hate Woman was carrying her six-shooter, which she aimed along with the rest. Then Weasel Tail gave out a mighty roar, to impress the people with his power.

Sliding Down called out to the people, in their own language, that Weasel Tail was a ferocious man who had killed many people with his power, which came from the Grizzly. The people became afraid and rushed away to seek shelter, giving Weasel Tail's party a chance to escape.

After this the party split up, Weasel Tail, Hate Woman, and one other man heading south to try again for Crow horses. On the way they encountered a lone enemy—a Crow man—whom they thought about killing and scalping. But when he came close they saw that he looked very pitiful and they knew that he was mourning. It turned out he had lost his wife and didn't care if he lived or died, so Weasel Tail made a prayer to Sun, asking for future pity for himself, and he let the man go. He and his wife met the same man again, in 1926, during an Indian celebration.

The three made their way back to the Crow country and managed to steal fourteen good horses, with which they returned to their own camps safely. Hate Woman was asked to recount this adventure during the tribal Sun Dance, which was a great and unusual honor for a woman.

RUNNING EAGLE—WOMAN WARRIOR OF THE BLACKFEET

Running Eagle has become the most famous woman in the history of the Blackfoot Nation because she gave up the work of the household in exchange for the war trails usually followed by men. In fact, she became so successful on her war adventures that many men called her a chief and eagerly followed her whenever she would take them.

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

followed her whenever she would take them. She was finally killed during one of her war adventures.

Because this woman died sometime around 1850 the actual facts of her life are now hard to separate from the popular legends. My grandmothers of today still talk about her, and an old book about her life can be found on some library shelves. However, all the stories agree that this woman was very successful in all but her final efforts, and that she was well liked and respected by her people. It is generally believed that she was also a holy woman who put up Sun Dances, for which she qualified by never marrying or taking a lover in her life. It is said that she pledged herself to Sun, as the result of a vision of power.

The popular story is that Running Eagle began life as an ordinary Blackfoot girl named Brown Weasel Woman. She had two brothers and two sisters, and her father was a well-known warrior. When she became of the age that boys begin to practice hunting, she asked her father to make a set of bow and arrows with which she could practice. He did so, though not without some argument from his wives. It is said that he even allowed her to go with him buffalo hunting, and that she learned to shoot well enough to bring some down.

It was during one of the buffalo hunts with her father that this unusual girl is said to have first shown her warrior's courage. There were only a few Blackfoot hunters in the party, and it was not far from the camps when an enemy war party attacked and chased it. As the people rode toward the camp at top speed, Brown Weasel Woman's father had his horse shot out from under him. One of the bravest deeds performed by warriors in the old days was to brave the enemy fire while riding back to rescue a companion who was left on foot. This is what the daughter did for her father, both of them making their escape on her horse, after she stopped to unload the fresh meat that was tied on behind her. When word of the attack reached the rest of the tribe, a great crowd

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

701
462
726

of warriors rode out after the enemy, killing many of them and chasing the rest away. The young woman's name was mentioned for days and nights after, as the people recounted what had taken place during that particular fight. It is said that some of the people complained, and feared that the girl performing men's deeds would set a bad example which might lead other girls to give up their household ways.

701
462
592

However, when her mother became helplessly ill sometime later, the future warrior woman decided on her own to take up household work. Since she was the eldest child in the family, there was no one to do the cooking and tanning while her mother slowly withered away. So she worked hard to learn what she had been avoiding, and she taught her younger brothers and sisters to help out wherever they could.

It is hard to say for how many years this young woman took the place of her mother in running the family household, but it is said that she did it very well. However, it is also said that she did it without receiving any pleasure from it, since she had probably already experienced too much excitement from the adventures of men's ways. At any rate, she had no boy friends and she took no interest in the plans others her age were making for marriage.

The turning point in the young woman's life came when her father was killed while on the war trail. News of his death also killed his widow, in her weakened state. The young woman and her brothers and sisters suddenly were orphaned, and she decided at that point to devote herself to her dream power giving her directions to follow men's ways. She took a widow woman into the lodge to help with the household work, and she directed her brothers and sisters in doing their share. She even carried a rifle—inherited from her father—at a time when many men still relied mainly on their bows and arrows.

[787]

701
462
726

Her first war adventure came not long after she and her family had gotten over their initial mourning. A war party

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

of men left the Blackfoot camps on the trail of Crow warriors who had come and stolen horses. When this party was well under way, one of its members noticed someone following behind, in the distance. It turned out to be the young woman, armed and dressed for battle. The leader of the party told her to go back, threatened her, and finally told her that he would take the whole party back home if she didn't leave them. She is said to have laughed and told him: "You can return if you want to; I will go on by myself."

One of the members of this party was a young man who was a cousin of the young woman—a brother, in Blackfoot relationships—and he offered to take her back himself. When she still refused to go, the leader of the party put this cousin of hers in charge of her well-being, so that they could all continue on their way. She grew up with this cousin, and learned to hunt by his side, so the two got along well, in general.

The war party with the young woman spent several days on the trail before they reached the enemy camps of the Crows. They made a successful raid, going in and out of the camp many times, by cover of night, to bring out the choice horses that their owners kept in front of the lodges. It is said that the woman and her cousin went in together and that she, by herself, captured eleven of the valuable runners. Before daylight they were mounted on their stolen horses and headed back toward their own homeland, driving ahead of them the rest of the captured herd. The Crows discovered their loss in the morning, and chased the party for some way. But the raiders were able to change horses whenever the ones they were riding became worn out, and in that way they soon left the enemy followers way behind.

However, the most exciting part of this first war adventure for the young Blackfoot woman was yet to come, according to the legend that has survived her. While the rest of the party rested and cooked in a hidden location, she kept watch on the prairie country from the top of a nearby butte. From

there she saw the approach of two enemy riders, and before she could alert the rest of her party to the danger, the enemies were ready to round up the captured herd. It is said that she ran down the butte with her rifle and managed to grab the rope of the herd's lead horse, to keep the rest from running away. Then, as the enemies closed in on her, expecting no trouble from a woman, she shot the one who carried a rifle and forced the other one to turn and try an escape. Instead of reloading her own rifle, she ran and grabbed the one from the fallen enemy, and shot after the one getting away. She missed him, but others of the party went after him and shortly brought him down as well. Her companions were quite surprised and pleased at what she had done. Not only had she saved their whole herd from being captured, but she also killed an enemy and captured his gun. She even captured his horse and one of the others took his scalp and presented her with it. It is said that she didn't want it, but she felt better when reminded that she had avenged her father's death.

Although the young woman's first war experience was quite successful, there were still many people who thought that the chiefs should make her stop following the ways of the men. However, the critical talking came to an end altogether after she followed the advice of wise elders and went out to fast and seek a vision. She spent four days and nights alone and the Spirits rewarded her with a vision that gave her the power that men consider necessary for leading a successful warrior's life. Such visions were not always received by those seeking them, and very seldom have women received them at all. By tribal custom, no one questioned her about the vision, nor did they doubt her right to follow the directions which she was thus given. From then on the people considered her as someone unusual, with special powers, whom only the Spirits could judge and guide.

The young woman's second war adventure took her west over the Rocky Mountains, to the camps of the Kalispell

tribe. Among her companions were some of the same men who had been on her first war raid, including her cousin/brother, with whom she was spending a lot of her time. This time, instead of wearing her buckskin dress, she had on a new suit of warrior's clothing, including leggings, shirt, and breechcloth. She also carried a fine rawhide war shield, that had been given to her by the man who married the widow woman who had moved into the orphan household some time before.

The second raid turned out quite successfully, although one member of the party was killed. They captured a herd of over six hundred horses, and killed a number of the enemy during a fight which followed their discovery during the raiding. The young woman was shot at, and would have been killed, but the two arrows both struck her shield, instead of her body.

The next time that the tribe gathered for the annual medicine lodge ceremony, the young woman was asked to get up with the other warriors and tell the people about her war exploits. Other women had done so, but they had usually gone in the company of their husbands and had not accomplished such fearless deeds as she. When she finished her stories the people applauded with drum beats and war whoops, as was the custom. Then the head chief of the tribe, a man named Lone Walker, is said to have honored her in a way never known to have been done for a woman. After a short talk and a prayer, he gave her a new name—Running Eagle—an ancient name carried by several famous warriors in the tribe before her. In addition, the Braves Society of young warriors invited her to become a member, which honor she is said to have accepted as well.

From that point on, Running Eagle, the young woman warrior, became the leader of the war parties she went with, no longer a follower. I cannot say how many such war raids she went on, nor how many horses she captured, nor enemies she killed. There are many different legends about them.

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

There are also legends of men who could not accept that this proud woman wanted no husband, so they tried all the ways known of to make her change her mind about marriage. But the issue was settled when she explained that Sun had come in her vision and told her that she must belong only to him, and that she could not go on living if she broke such a commandment.

As Running Eagle lived by the war trail, so she died also. It was when she led a large party of warriors against the Flathead tribe in revenge for their killing of some men and women who had gone from the Blackfoot camps one morning to hunt and butcher buffalo. The revenge party was a very large one, and she led it right to the edge of the Flathead camp during the night. In the early morning, after waiting for the camp to be cleared of the prize horses by their herders, she gave the cry to attack. There followed a long drawn-out battle in which many of the enemy were killed. After the initial shooting, the battle turned into a free-for-all in which clubs and knives were the main weapons. Running Eagle was attacked by a large enemy with a club, whom she killed, but another came up behind her and killed her with his club. One of Running Eagle's men in turn killed this man. When the battle was over, the members of her party found her, the large man in front, the other behind, and she dead in the middle. And so ended the career of the woman warrior whose life has become a legend among the Blackfeet.

A WOMAN WHO FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF A MAN

The Kootenay people are neighbors of the Bloods, to the west, just across the Rocky Mountains. In the buffalo days they often came over into our prairie country to hunt. Sometimes we were at peace with them, and other times we fought.

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

593 302 all about going for a ride. Instead I kept hanging around the window so I could look in and see if she was up yet. Finally I saw her sitting up. She had real long hair, and my mother was combing it. Then my father told my mother to take her outside. We had no toilets in those days. By the time they got back I was already inside and sitting down. Ponah kept looking over at me, but she didn't say nothing. I think she knew that something was wrong, but she didn't know what. My father told my mother to feed her. She asked my mother: "Are there any eggs?" I told her: "Yes, there is a big bird flying around outside and he really has big eggs!" My mother got mad at me right away, but I just said: "Well, she wants bird eggs, and I just want to help her." She just told me to keep quiet.

So, the eggs got cooked and served on a plate to Ponah. She was just about to take her first bite, when I called her, quietly: "Ponah!" She looked at me, and I just pointed at my face. She screamed out loud: "Her face is painted!" and she threw herself back and dropped all her food and just kept screaming like she was injured. My father jumped up, and I ran out the door as fast as I could toward where my horse was. Nobody caught me, but they called after me: "Come back and we will wash your face so that she can be painted first." I was almost by my horse, so I just called to them: "No, I'm already painted, why should I want to wash it off again?" Usually I wiped my face right away after I got painted, but this time I kept the paint on all day. She just kept crying.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES
by Paula Weasel Head

868 462 592 When we were small we learned about household work by watching our mother, the way that she did things. She was a hard worker and she was very good at everything. That was

462 in the days when men were still treated like kings by the
592 women; they didn't do anything to help around the home. My father would sit and smoke his pipe, or sing songs and visit, and let my mother serve him and take care of everything. We were quite young, so she didn't make us work either. We would just play and watch.

342 We didn't have a very big house to live in when we were kids. But it was a good and warm one made of logs. My father [343] always provided my mother with a separate log house to cook in. In it she had tables and chairs and she kept it to suit herself. She always began her work by chopping some wood, and then cleaning up her work area. If there was a meal to fix, she would cook. Otherwise she would sit down to sew or do beadwork. She never sat around idle. My sister and I learned well not to be idle, from our mother.

574 During the day my father would often saddle his horse and go visiting. He would ride over to the home of his mother. His father had several wives and they were all my father's mothers. Other times he would go to visit different relatives and friends. Back in the days before we were born my father had been to war with some of those friends, and they always talked about those times when they got together. The spoiled way that my father acted was left over from those days, when men did all the fighting, hunting, and looking after the family horses, and the women did everything around the home.

512 While my father went riding my mother would stay home with us and do her work. Sometimes she would sew things for us, or tan hides for rugs or clothing. She would watch the sun, and when he got to a certain place in the sky she would start the fire for cooking. She would make tea, because she knew that my father would be home soon. He always came back before dark. When he got in she would serve him tea. He would sit at his place, at the back of the room, by the altar and under his bundles. He would slowly drink his tea, and

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

just starting to learn our old ways, too, they don't know enough to teach their children yet. Our young people need a lot of encouragement and guidance to learn about these things and to try some of them.

I recall that when I first started asking my grandmothers about their old ways they sometimes discouraged me and made me feel silly for having such interests. When I first started wearing long skirts and dresses even my own grandmother told me that I should stop. "You look like an old lady," she told me. Even though their belief in these traditions was very strong, they had been made to feel that there was no future in this world for their children and grandchildren if they didn't put these old ways aside.

But once my grandmothers saw that I was sincere in wanting to learn their old ways they were very encouraging. They didn't think any of us younger girls cared about cutting up meat properly to dry, or about putting soles on moccasins so that they wear well. I think it pleased them to know that they had something very special to offer us young people, even if it took a while for them to believe that times had changed enough to make us young people want to learn.

I think history about Indians has often neglected the women. We get the impression that women just did their daily work and drudgery and had nothing to look forward to or talk about. When I was young I used to think that the old-time Indian women were sold and treated like slaves, because that's what the books said. I have found out that among some tribes the women were not too well treated, but among others they were equal to the men and among some they even served as chiefs and leaders.

Actually, when you judge the traditional lives of my grandmothers by modern values you could, indeed, say that they had hard lives and were much mistreated. The modern woman would rebel against carrying loads of firewood home in the middle of a cold winter while her husband sat inside the house

462 smoking and entertaining his friends. Yet my grandmothers did it for as long as they could walk, and they were not known to complain. They brought water, too, from the holes that they chopped into the frozen river. But my grandfathers, in turn, spent countless frozen days and nights out on those same cold winter days, seeking food to kill and bring home; or defending their families from prowling enemies; or hiking several hundred miles to bring home needed horses and social honor. Times have changed so much that we can barely imagine the daily challenges faced by our forefathers. For that reason it is pretty hard to make any judgments about the ways they did things.

462 562 Let me just say that in the culture of my people the work of the women was generally respected and honored, for the men knew very well that they could not live without them. The people of the past thought it a great honor that the women should bear and rear the children, ensuring that there would be people in the future. Equally honorable was the women's work of creating the lodges that made the homes, taking them up and down when camp moved, heating them, and providing the bedding and clothing for the household members. In the social life of my grandmothers, a household was judged not only by the bravery and generosity of the man, but also by the kindness and work habits of the woman. Even the wife of a poor man could find honor among the people by being a good housekeeper.

554

000 This traditional life of housekeeping was passed from mother to daughter through daily experience, not in classrooms or from books. That is why I feel that the Sun Dance encampment is so important for the young among my people. That is also why I feel that young women should offer their help and friendship to the old. What better way is there to learn which wood burns best in a fire, and which kind of meat is best to roast? How else would I know that one of the finest rewards for being an old woman comes from going outside the

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

313
482

This is the way my grandmothers brought home their firewood—day after day, summer and winter. You can imagine how glad they were to get axes from the traders to help with their work. Men sometimes helped to get firewood, but mostly the women took care of that and water hauling. (PHOTO: GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, GOOD MEDICINE FOUNDATION)

[462]
[312]

[p. 172]

281 pended on the use that the hide was going to be put to, as well as the skills and desires of the one doing the tanning. In any case, tanning was women's work among the Bloods, [462] [171] and other Plains people.

The first stage of tanning turns a fresh hide into rawhide. I have heard the term *rawhide* used by people to describe all kinds of leather. Actually it should only be used to describe 415 a hide that is cleaned but otherwise untanned. Rawhide was most commonly used for the different kinds of storage containers that the people used. For instance, what my grandmothers used for suitcases were called parfleches (a French word), or "covering for things," (translated from Blackfoot). A parfleche is made of one solid piece of rawhide, folded somewhat like an envelope, and sometimes measuring two feet by three feet. Parfleches were used to hold clothing and [531] dried food. On the outside they were usually decorated with geometric designs. When they were packed full, properly folded, and tied with several tie strings, they were nearly safe from bother by mice and bugs. Rawhide was also made into square bags, to hold holy things; cylindrical bags, to hold headdresses and special clothing; saddlebags, for being transported; as well as moccasin soles, drumheads, and rattles.

MAKING RAWHIDE

281 Rawhide articles are best made from the hides of buffalo and, more recently, beef. The first step is to stretch the hide, which was most often done by staking it out on the ground, [412] hair side down, with tipi stakes. A fleshing tool is used to remove all the fat and chunks of meat that are clinging to the hide. A knife can be used for this, though not as conveniently. This job requires more strength than skill. The only thing to watch for is not to cut into the hide while removing the scraps.

Since there were no other activities on the afternoon of this fourth day in camp, we took the opportunity to return to our house, along the Bullhorn Coulee. I wanted to pick up some yellow paint for the Horns and to water our horses and fill up their trough. And SikskiAki and I were looking forward to a refreshing bath in our private swimming hole. 000

When we got home that's the first thing we did. A few cattle ranches between our place and the mountains keep us from drinking the otherwise clear water, but they sure don't keep us from lying in the cool flow of the river. Then we relaxed quietly on a blanket in the warmth of Sun.

We enjoyed the privacy not possible at the campground. There, unexpected visitors can drop by at any time. In the Old Days, visitors were probably reassuring in the northern plains, vast and lurking with danger and enemy. But even then, men sometimes went on the warpath to "get away from it all." On the warpath they had the opportunity to reevaluate themselves and family and friends. When they returned, they could be assured of a change in routine, with new adventures to talk about, new horses to train and ride, and new possessions to admire and share. 156 721 [574]

Women seldom had the opportunity for privacy, except when they went down to the river for water or to the woods for fuel. Only a few husbands allowed their wives to share in the adventures of hunting and horse raiding. Most were confined to the daily chores of child care and housekeeping. 156 [462]

Sun was low in the sky, an evening ember still shooting its rays across to us, as we drove back to the camp in the east. There, the Buttes looked like flaming sentinels watching over the flat where the camp was. Just before dipping below the horizon, Sun's last rays bathed the Buttes in orange colors, leaving the edges of the fissures and caves outlined in red, their insides already black with darkness. 000

The road between the Buttes and the reserve is unmarked, but we all know it as the Belly 487

[p. 137-A]

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

wrapping paper, no paper sacks; our customers furnished their own receptacles for their purchases. A pint cup, not a pound, was our standard of measurement. Sugar was twenty-five cents per cup; coffee, fifty cents; tea, fifty cents; flour, three cups for fifty cents; and so on. Tobacco was two dollars a pound; cartridges, two dollars a box; and other merchandise that we had in stock—red trade cloth, blue trade cloth, calico, gingham, needles and thread, baking powder, Chinese vermilion, axes, knives, pots, and frying pans—went at better than 100 per cent profit. Our prices exorbitant? No. The Pikunis were rich; meat was their staff of life, and they had plenty of it. All that we traded to them for their buffalo robes and furs were—except cartridges, knives, and axes—luxuries that they did not need.

White were the four hundred new, buffalo-leather lodge-skins of the Pikuni camp; those of the Sun priests, medicine men, painted in vivid colors with symbols of their sky gods, sun, moon, and the stars, and the birds and animals of their visions, their dreams. At the rear top of every lodge-skin was painted in red and black a small figure resembling a Maltese cross. It was the symbol for the butterfly, believed to be the giver of good dreams.

So long as they had plenty of buffalo for the killing of them, no people anywhere on earth were happier, more content, than those of the Blackfoot tribes. Meat was *nitápi waksin*, "real food"; all other eatables were *kistapi waksin*, "nothing foods." As meat and hides were needed, the men hunted. That was not work; it was exciting sport. To the women fell all of the lodge work, yet they had much leisure time; none worked as hard as the average white farmer's wife.

With the break of day, the women started their lodge fires, and the men, wrapped only in robes or blankets, herded their boys, from three-year-olds up, to the river to bathe. In summer, in winter, regardless of the weather, that was their daily custom. When unable to find open water, they dropped their wraps and rolled in the snow, then hurried home to dress. The baths, they said, inured them to the cold; enabled them to hunt and butcher their kills in severest weather without even freezing their fingertips. In summer the women daily flocked to the stream for a swim; in winter they had sweat baths in small lodges built for that purpose alone.

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

or burning stick to the mixture, blew a whiff of smoke to the sky, exclaiming: "Oh, Sun! Oh, Above People! Pity us; help us." Then another whiff to the ground with: "Oh, Earth Mother! Pity us; help us." With that, he leisurely drew a few whiffs of smoke from the pipe, inhaling deeply, and from him the pipe went from hand to hand straight to the end man of the row, then from him to be smoked by the others in turn until it returned to the host. So was it smoked from east to west, thus imitating the daily courses of the sun. Sun priests in the row of guests grasped the stem of the pipe with both hands when taking, smoking, and passing it on, imitating the actions of the bear, sacred animal, when seizing anything. No others were privileged to do that. (Then, too, the Sun priests' special name for the bear was *páksi kwoyi*, "sticky mouth." The common people called the animal *kaiyo*, "lost.")

The pipe smoked out, the host cleaned the bowl, allowed it to cool, then refilled it, and it went again the length of the row of guests. Generally, it was filled and smoked three times in the course of an hour or so of pleasant talk. Then at last, ostentatiously knocking the pipe bowl upon his tobacco cutting board, the host loudly exclaimed, "*Kyi! Itsinitsi!*" ("There! It is burned out!"). Whereat the guests arose, filed out of the lodge, and went their several ways. What a boon that would be to civilized hosts so at will to dismiss their guests!

Persistent hunting and killing of cow buffalo began in November, and the women were soon busily converting the heavily furred hides into well-tanned robes. It was arduous work. The hides were fleshed; that is, cleaned of all adhering scraps of meat and fat, then laced into lodgepole frames, where they dried as stiff and firm as thin boards. Then, standing upon the hide, smooth side up, the tanner, with an elkhorn-handled, steel-bladed instrument the shape of a hoe, chipped it to about one-half its original thickness and rubbed it with grease. When that was thoroughly soaked in, the hide was then well smeared with a mixture of boiled liver and brains, folded and rolled, and laid away for several days in order for the mixture to neutralize its glue. Then came the hardest of the work: the tanner for an hour or so at a time rubbed and seesawed the hide against upright, stretched thongs of rawhide, until, at last, it became almost as

soft and pliable as velvet. The result: a well-tanned cow buffalo robe for which we gave five dollars worth of trade goods.

Persistent hunting of the buffalo herds caused them to drift ever farther eastward from us, until, by the beginning of January, the nearest of them were from Armell Creek eastward. From that time on, the hunters, with their accompanying women helpers, had to go farther and farther eastward and southward to make their kills—hard work in the intense cold and quite deep snow. In early February, when returning from a hunt, one member of a party froze to death, and others were so badly frosted that they were crippled for life.

Beginning in December, we daily had a good trade for buffalo robes. Since we had no whisky, some of our customers occasionally went up to Reed and Bowle's place (Reed's Fort) for a spree. So was it that one day, in a drunken row up there, our friend Bear Chief killed a Red River half blood named Flory.

Ours was a contented, prosperous camp when, early in March, dire disaster came upon us. Arrived one afternoon from Fort Benton, Lieutenant Crouse with a dozen mounted infantrymen, and he tremblingly announced that he had come at once to escort the Pikunis back to their own country, to their agency on Badger Creek. This he gave out at a gathering of the Pikuni chiefs and warriors, with Kipp as interpreter. It was, he said, that "Colonel" Henry Brooks (a rancher close above us) complained that the Pikunis were killing his cattle. That, of course, could not be allowed. Therefore the Pikunis must go.

Roared Chief Running Crane: "That white man is a liar. We have killed none of his white horns (cattle). We would be foolish to kill them when we have constantly all the real meat (buffalo) that we want."

Said the head chief, White Calf: "Our hunters have seen this white man's white horns grazing with our buffalo even as far down as Bear River (Musselshell). That is where his white horns have gone."

Then Little Plume: "Soldier chief, are you crazy? You say that we must return to our country. This, right here where we are, is our country."

Lieutenant Crouse: "Not yours, this part of the country. Your

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

294 [777] [533] Spear Woman had decided that her daughter should have a new gown of soft-tanned thin antelope skins, and there was much talk about the making of it. There should be, they decided, two suns of red, white, and yellow porcupine quillwork on the breast; a red quill butterfly—symbol of good dreams and good luck—high up on the back; and from the waist down, rows of elk tushes. Six antelope skins were needed for it, the mother said, and it was for Eagle Head and me to furnish them.

224 [462] [533] So was it that we four rode out from camp early one morning—Eagle Head and I to hunt, mother and daughter to gather chokecherries. As we turned from the camp, heading up the valley of the Musselshell, Eagle Head broke out with the Defiance Song: "*Ahksi Kiwa! Ahksi Kiwa! Ahksi Kiwa!*" ("I care for nothing! I care for nothing! I care for nothing!").

777 533 224 "Eagle Head," exclaimed Spear Woman, "at once stop singing that bad-luck song else you will get us into trouble! For three days your uncle, Little Otter, sang it before he went out against that bad Cutthroat, White Dog, and he never returned. It is an unlucky song for this family. I forbid you to sing it."

"*Ha!* Just your woman's thought of it. It is a good song; it makes one feel brave," he replied, but sang it no more.

224 [291] [237] After riding up the valley five or six miles we turned east into a wide brushy coulee. Eagle Head, wearing a cap made of the upper skin and horns of a buck antelope head, was in the lead. As we neared the head of the coulee he motioned for us to stop and went on very slowly, rising often in his stirrups to get a view of the plain. Suddenly he ducked, slid from his horse, and beckoned us to join him. In a moment we were out of our saddles and beside him.

"Step out a little farther, look out through the brush and you will see them, a big band of antelope," he said.

Sure enough, well up on the slope of a ridge about a mile south of us was a band of a hundred or more, all lying down except three or four sentinel bucks keenly watching for the possible coming of enemies, wolves or men. Between them and us stretched a level plain, but close behind the ridge on which they were resting was a long coulee running down to the valley of the river.

Eagle Head spoke swiftly to his mother: "You and sister turn

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

back with us to the mouth of this coulee where we saw the big patch of cherries. Then *Apikuni* and I will go on up the valley behind the ridge until we are opposite the antelope. If they remain where they are now, we shall be able to kill all we want."

That meant that we would make a circle of four or five miles before we would get to the band. Back we all went to the mouth of the coulee, and as Eagle Head and I parted from the women at the edge of the cherry trees he said to them: "There! Pick plenty of fruit; but when you hear us shoot, come hurrying to help butcher our kills."

We left them, eagerly beginning to fill their pouches with the ripe fruit, and rode as fast as we could up the valley. When we came to the mouth of the coulee, Eagle Head turned up to the rim of the plain for another look at the game and reported that the band was still lying down.

We found this coulee to be narrow, winding, and boulder strewn, and it took us some time to work our way up it and past the ridge. At last we left it and rode along until we thought that we were opposite the game; then, dismounting, we picketed our horses and headed for the summit of the ridge. From that high point we looked down the other slope through its growth of sage and found that the antelope were straight below us, but more than three hundred yards away. Save for three sentinel bucks, all were lying down.

Creeping back a little way, Eagle Head signed to me: "They are too far for sure killing. Stay where you are; be ready; I will bring them close to us."

Advancing, he rose until his horned cap showed plainly above the sagebrush. At sight of it the white rump hair of the sentinels bristled. Eagle Head lowered his cap out of sight, then exposed it again three or four times. Apparently the old sentinels thought it was the head of one of their kind, and they resented its presence in the vicinity of their family of does and young. At second sight of the cap, they stepped stiffly forward, shaking their heads, stamping their forefeet, and snorting, causing the whole band to spring up in alarm; and, as the cap bobbed up for the fourth time, the sentinels came charging toward us, followed by the others.

That was what we had hoped to bring about. The leaders of the

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

though they were not present. And then, one by one, they sent friends to her father to speak for them; but always the answer was: "My daughter bids me say to you that she will never marry. You should know as well as I do that she is not of two tongues."

So at last all courting of Otter Woman ceased. And then one day she asked her father to organize a party to make a raid on the Crows and allow her to accompany him as his pipe carrier, his servant; for she wanted to learn the ways of war and in time become a leader of war parties, as that ancestor of theirs, that virgin warrior, Running Eagle, had led parties in the long ago.

"Yes, successfully for a time, until she was shot down in a night raid upon a camp of the River People," said Eagle Plume.

"*Ha!* But what a happy way to die. Father, it is that I want to avenge fully the passing of the one I love, the only one I ever could love. I want to fight and fight and fight the Crows; make them pay dearly for what they have done to me."

"Oh, no! No!" her mother cried. "Daughter, you were not born for the war trail; your ways are the ways of real women; you love the lodge and all the lodge work. She was a man in a woman's body, that Running Eagle; when of but few winters, she demanded of her father a real bow and arrows. She hunted with him; killed buffalo, deer, elk, even real bears."

To Otter Woman, it was as though her mother had not spoken; she kept her eyes on Eagle Plume, and after long thought he replied: "This that you ask of me is very serious. I will pray the Above Ones to give me a revealing vision; it is for them to point out to me what answer to make to your request."

Time passed and Eagle Plume seemed to be unable to get the dream that he wanted; then one day he came hurrying into his lodge and said to the girl: "Daughter, the Above Ones, as you know, have given me no vision about that which you asked of me, and now I know their reason for denying it to me: I have just now been visiting with Talks-with-the-Buffalo. He has asked me to give you to him."

Otter Woman laughed. And then: "That man! Of your own age: of two wives and many children! He must be crazy. What did he say when you told him that I shall never marry?"

fear was the shouting and waving of us frighteners, continually rising upon their either side and running after them. So on they ran, straight ahead, down into the little coulee and jumped off the cutbank into the *piskan*, we frighteners singing and yelling, hurrying thither. Oh, what a satisfying sight it was, that great *piskan* filled with buffalo, as later counted, 181 of them; our hunters on top of the *piskan*, with guns and with bows and arrows shooting them. I climbed up onto the *piskan* beside my father, reloading his flintlock gun. "Give it to me. Let me kill one!" I yelled.

"No! You are too young for that," he said. But I grasped his arm, hung onto it, pleaded hard, and at last he handed me the gun. I aimed it at a yearling close by; aimed for the ball to pierce the lungs. I pulled the trigger, and down off the *piskan* that gun kicked me flat upon my back. My father and the others near by laughed at me. I climbed back upon the *piskan* and looked down: my yearling was dead.

"Laugh, you crazy ones; I don't care. I have killed a buffalo," I yelled.

Said my father as he recovered his gun: "So you have, my son. Next time hold the gun tight against your shoulder and it will not kick you."

Men and women, boys and girls, we all worked hard the rest of that day in butchering the many buffalo, and with pack horses and travois horses getting the meat and hides across the river to camp. And then what a happy evening for us all! My father's friends were constantly coming to our lodge to smoke with him and praise him for his decoying of the herd. There was feasting and smoking and singing in nearly every lodge. Some of the warrior societies, the Crazy Dogs, Raven Carriers, Kit Foxes, and others, sang and danced. I sneaked into the lodge of the Raven Carriers society to see them dance, hear their powerful heart-stirring songs. Their leader, Eagle Head, had recently led a war party on a raid against the Crows, and they had returned with many horses and scalps. He, himself, had killed three of the Crows. He noticed me sneaking into the lodge and I thought that he would tell me to leave. But, no. He signed to me to come and sit upon his couch. I did so and he patted my shoul-

25: Ewers E,G-5 (1941-1951) 1963 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

000 usually were the only ones of their sex who smoked for pleasure.

276 All men and many older women owned pipes. The making of [562] tobacco pipes generally was regarded as a man's craft, although there [463] were a few women among the Blackfoot who were pipemakers. Even [462] in buffalo days pipemaking was a specialized craft. The number of pipemakers in each of the three Blackfoot tribes was small. They [438] supplied their own needs for pipes and made them for gifts to, or [437] barter with, their fellow tribesmen and women. It was not uncom- [431] mon for a pipemaker, in the youth of my informants, to receive a [435] horse, several buffalo robes, or other articles of equivalent value in exchange for a well-made tobacco pipe bowl and stem. Some pipemakers fashioned pipes to order for their Indian customers.

276 In recent years cigarette smoking has largely replaced pipe smoking 177 among the great majority of Blackfoot men and women. Never- 178 less, some of the older people of a high degree of Indian blood still smoke stone pipes for pleasure. And, of course, the pipe remains the traditional smoking equipment in Blackfoot ceremonies.

[431] Although the demand for pipes has decreased materially within the present century, there were still more than a dozen pipemakers living on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana and the Blood Reserve in Alberta in the decade of the 1940's, several of whom still [438] made pipes as gifts to other Indians or to Whites. Very few pipes were made for sale.

178 Time has dealt rather harshly with the traditional men's handi- 463 crafts of the Blackfoot. In the 1940's there probably were as many [462] pipemakers among the Blackfoot as there were makers of feather bonnets, drums, or other men's handicrafts. However, all the known pipemakers were elderly or middle-aged Indians, and unless some of the younger people take an active interest in pipemaking, this age-old craft will disappear from the Blackfoot Indians.

PIPE BOWL TYPES

THE STRAIGHT PIPE

323 When Clark Wissler investigated Blackfoot material culture in 276 the field during the first decade of the present century, he found that "some old people stated that according to tradition, stone pipe bowls were not made before the introduction of iron tools. Blocks of hard tough clay were cut into the form of a pipe bowl, rubbed with grease, and hardened over the fire and by use." Wissler was dubious of this explanation. "This is an agreement with the traditions concerning pottery but seems unlikely" (Wissler, 1910, p. 83).

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

buffalo went out of sight." Before this time, these Indians of the Plains had been buffalo hunters and horse raiders. Afterwards, and by a somewhat devious process, they became cattle breeders and wheat farmers.

Some one hundred and fifty years earlier, the introduction of the horse and the gun had also radically affected their mode of life. Mobility increased, the hunting range was extended, competition was intensified, both outside and inside the tribal group. The horse became the most sought-for and fought-for possession, and despite disease, accidents of climate and enemy raids, accumulation was possible and led, in the course of time, to marked wealth differences. Some men might have one hundred horses (Maximilian, Prince of Wied-Neuwied, gives a much larger figure) and some might have only a few or none. The dangers of decrease were mitigated by elaborate manipulation. The horse became not only the measure of wealth but the medium of exchange. Everything—trade goods, bride price, ceremonial privilege, and often personal support—were paid for in horses. Loss in capital was temporary. Pipes, bundles, society insignia, could all be resold, often at a profit, and a return for "gifts" or conspicuous distributions at give-aways was normal expectancy. In addition, a poor man who had to borrow a horse from a rich patron—not infrequently the band chief—would have to pay over one-half his kill to his benefactor.

Thus the fact that great numbers of horses could be accumulated and held for a considerable period led to certain advantage; and this advantage was in no way destroyed by manipulation. Shrewdly organized, it could build prestige and bring support.

It was particularly in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, when the fur trade was expanding and more goods came into the hands of the Blood, that the demonstrations of wealth became insistent. It was in this period that the rich man increased the number of his wives (he might have six or seven, while the poor man could not pay for one and had to be content with surreptitious visits to a younger and "uncertain" wife of a more fortunate tribesman); and having many wives, the rich man's tipi could be large and impressive (it was women's work to clean and tan the hides, sew them together and erect the dwelling); and it was also at this time that the "favorite," the *minipoka*, the "child of plenty" received formal recognition as a means of exploiting wealth. The influence of this institution on the father-child relationship has been significant. Today, in a different setting, its role is particularly so.

But whatever the potential increase in the food supply, or the possibility and advantage of accumulation after the introduction of the horse, for the Blood in the buffalo period, life was still precarious. Ex-

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

175 Union, bringing with them for sale a white buffalo robe.
439 It seems that at that time the Mandans were desirous of
648 making a sacrifice of unusual costliness, and a council was at once called to consider the propriety of securing this robe. It was decided to do so and the means were provided with which to effect the purchase, consisting of eight of their best horses bearing goods of a value exceeding that of the horses. These were dispatched to Fort Union, the Blackfeet were still there with their treasure, the price was accepted, and ere long the wonderful robe was on exhibition in the lodge of the principal chief of the
175 Mandans. In due time after public curiosity was gratified
648 by its inspection, the robe was consecrated by the medicine men and attached to a pole over the Mandan medicine lodge, where, according to the custom of the tribe, it probably remained until it disappeared from decay.

It can not certainly be said that this robe and the one that disappeared from the Blackfoot medicine lodge are identical, but we think that few of our readers will hesitate to arrive at that conclusion.

SONGS

533 The songs of the Blackfeet had no words but existed in great variety. They were scarcely to be called monotonous, as they possessed quite a range of notes and varied greatly in expression from the lowest articulation to the most vociferous yells. They were, however, unmusical to civilized ears.

SCALPS

727 When scalps were taken they were turned over to the
535 squaws upon the arrival of the war party at the village, to
[462] be prepared for the scalp dance. This was done by stretching each scalp upon a hook, the hook being then attached to a small pole, six or eight feet long, a separate pole for each scalp. Each pole is borne by a squaw, usually a relative of the warrior who took it, who leads in the dance, the warriors and squaws all arrayed in their best attire following her in single file in a circle of a size proportioned to the number of dancers. The step of the dance is

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

726 contrary to the popular belief, the surprise of a village was
72 not difficult. In times of apprehended danger the young men would lie in concealment upon the outskirts of the camp, and were vigilant and effective sentinels. Neither did the camp maintain any system of outposts when its often vast herds of horses were grazed in the surrounding
233 valleys and upon the hill tops. Each family looked after
231 its own interests in this respect, driving its horses where it will, and leaving them at pleasure, unprotected or watched by
[887] some member of the lodge, usually a boy or woman. Sometimes some old warrior, incapacitated for more worthy service, had a general superintendence of the boy herders, seeing that they did not stray too far or loiter too long when the hour arrived for driving the herds into the village. Usually the horses were all brought in before night and picketed in
[417] the vicinity of the lodges. Horse corrals were sometimes
[462] made of small poles by the united labors of the squaws of the village within which the horses of the whole village were nightly assembled. When no danger was apprehended, bands of horses were sometimes driven to a secluded place
[721] and left for days together without a guard. It is thus seen why a daring war party could successfully approach within the vicinity of a village and drive off the outlying bands of horses which were ever such a temptation to the enterprising and adventurous brave.

DIVISION OF LABOR

462 The women performed all the drudgery of camp. The only occupations reserved to the men were war and the chase.

SMALLPOX AMONG THE BLACKFEET

164 Smallpox visited the Blackfeet a second time in the year 1849 and again in 1869-70. No account of losses in the first case has been recorded.

PRESENT STRENGTH OF THE BLACKFEET

162 Major Culbertson says the Blackfeet now (1876) number three hundred lodges; Bloods, three hundred, averaging six persons to a lodge.

them only as static, sharply outlined, raw colored articles in electrically lighted museum cases. We must picture them in use among the hardy, restless, mobile Indians living in the bright sunlight of the open plains. In motion in the out-of-doors the outlines seem to become less harsh. In brilliant sunlight, and against bright blue sky, the intense colors seem very appropiate. 121

The arts and crafts of the Blackfeet, generally, were similar to those of neighboring Indian tribes. Nevertheless, differences in detail gave to most of them a distinct tribal character. [171]

THE FOUR MAJOR CRAFTS

The primitive Blackfeet who hunted the wandering buffalo on the Northwestern Plains required material for clothing and shelter that would stand hard wear and could be transported easily in compact bundles. They found that the skins of the larger animals of their country—the buffalo, deer, elk, antelope and mountain sheep—admirably met these conditions. Lodge covers of buffalo cow skins could be folded tightly, packed on travois, and moved from one temporary camping place to another. Skin clothing not only wore well, and could be transported easily, but it was warm enough to afford protection against the bitter, sub-zero cold of northern winters. Containers of tough, durable, rainproof rawhide or soft dressed skins made excellent storage and packing cases. Consequently, articles made of animal skins comprised a large and important part of the meagre possessions of the nomadic Blackfeet. The four major crafts of the Blackfeet are concerned primarily with the manufacture and ornamentation of articles fashioned from animal skins. These are the crafts of skin preparation and sewing, painting, quillwork and beadwork. 237 [136] [493] [132] [415]

SKIN PREPARATION AND SEWING

Although men were the hunters, the preparation of animal skins was women's work. 281 462 ●
[P·16-A]

Very hard work it was too. It took a sturdy, industrious woman to dress all of the hides required by a family. Indeed, the need for many helping hands in this difficult task has been cited as one of the reasons why successful hunters usually took several wives. 281 462 [595]

Skin Dressing

The dressing of a buffalo hide involved a series of simple processes. Fragments of tissue and fat mixed with blood still adhered to the inner side of a buffalo hide after skinning. The woman's first task was to remove this matter by a process known as fleshing. She stretched the hide out on the ground, hair side down, and drove lodge pins through it at intervals around the edge to hold it in place. She knelt on her knees over the hide and hacked away the undesired matter with short, vigorous blows of a sharp-toothed, fleshing tool held in her right hand. (See figure 3a) 281 [412]

3a. Fleshing. Removing tissue and fat

Then, after the hide had cured and bleached in the sun a few days, she took an adze-like tool and scraped the inner surface of the hide to an even thickness. She stood on the hide, leaned over, and chipped away the surface by moving her sharp-bladed tool much as a skilled carpenter uses a plane. When she was satisfied that the inner surface of the hide was smooth and even, she turned it over and removed the hair from the outside with this same tool. Some women preferred to take the hair off with blows from a rock instead of with the scraping [412] [412]

[P.10-B]

joints of garments or containers by covering them with bands of decoration in beadwork or quillwork, or adding an ornamental skin fringe. This way of hiding the seams is demonstrated in the decoration of men's dress shirts made by the Blackfeet. Invariably, the long sleeve seams of the shirts are covered with decorated bands of ornamentation. (See illustration on page 47.)

The preparation of skins, and their manufacture into useful articles were laborious, time-consuming, even monotonous women's tasks. But they were very necessary ones for the Blackfeet. Most White people are inclined to overlook work in skins in favor of the more colorful and striking decorative arts of painting, quillwork and beadwork. It is not so with Indians. They are quick to notice and approve a finely dressed skin of soft, even texture and color, or a well made skin article. They are quick to reject a poorly dressed skin or a careless piece of sewing. Of the four major crafts, work in skins was certainly of basic importance. Women who were especially skilled in this work had a right to be proud of their ability.

PAINTING

Next to the dressing and sewing of skins, painting is probably the oldest of the major Blackfeet arts or crafts. Certainly it dates back to prehistoric times. Early traders and explorers found the Blackfeet living in painted lodges and wearing painted buffalo robes. The materials used in painting were readily obtained in the Blackfeet country.

Paints

Native paints were both numerous and ingenious. They were derived from animal, vegetable and mineral sources. Earth paints were most common. The Blackfeet employed a half-dozen different reds, providing colors of several hues and intensities. Red paints were prepared from crimson colored earth, and crushed, pale, reddish-yellow rock. A reddish brown was obtained by baking a gray or yellowish clay over ashes until it turned red. In the spring of the year the

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

136

25. The porcupine.

met White men. In historic times quillwork always has been women's work. 531 [462]

Porcupine Quills

The western porcupine has been a native of the Blackfeet country throughout the historic period. Porcupines are still abundant on and near the modern reservations of the Blackfeet in Montana and Alberta. The tail and most of the body of the porcupine are covered with hollow, cylindrical quills. Porcupine quills are of a whitish color with black tips. They vary in diameter and length. The largest quills, from the tail of the animal, are about five inches long and one-eighth inch in diameter. The finest, from the belly, are scarcely an inch in length and very thin. Intermediate sizes appear on the animal's back and neck. The Blackfeet rarely used the smaller quills in embroidery. The average porcupine yields about 8 ounces of quills. They are very light in weight, averaging about 4,000 to the ounce. 136 237 531 237

Dyeing Porcupine Quills

In Blackfeet quillwork some of the quills were used in their natural color, others were dyed to enable the craftswoman to work out attractive polychrome designs. Native dyestuffs were of vegetable origin. Before dyeing, the basal tip of each quill was broken off. Elderly Indians recalled that the quills were dyed by dampening a quantity of the dye plant in water, placing a number of quills on top of it, and wrapping them together in a piece of buckskin. The package was placed under the woman's bed on the ground inside the lodge, where it was pressed by the weight of her body for a 237 386 824 237 386

[P 28-A)

boiling them in water with a quantity of colored trade cloth. This method was common in Maximilian's time. Nevertheless, despite the widespread use of commercial dyes, some Blackfeet women continued to employ native dyes within the memory of elderly Indians still living. Generally the plant dyes imparted a more delicate coloring to the quills than did the strong commercial dyes. 237 386 177 178

The Quillworker's Tools and Methods

Elderly Blackfeet say that quillwork was regarded as a sacred craft by their people. Girls or young women were taught the craft by the older women. First the younger women were initiated ceremonially into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills. It was claimed that women who attempted to do quillwork without having first experienced this ceremony would surely "go blind" or suffer from a swelling of the finger joints. Then they were taught how to use the tools of the quillworker's craft and how to employ the various methods of quill sewing, plaiting and wrapping known to their elders. Quills of the same size in assorted colors were kept in long, cigar shaped, bladder containers until ready for use. The quillworker's kit also included one or more bone or metal awls for making holes in the skin, a quantity of sinew thread for passing through these holes in attaching the quills to the surface of the skin, and a bone or horn instrument for pressing and flattening the quills after they had been sewn to a flat surface. The Blackfeet quillworker held quills in her mouth to soften them, then flattened them between her teeth and put them in place at once. It was customary for a beginner to give her first piece of quillwork as an offering to the sun. 237 462 868 153 415 412 283 413 182

Articles Decorated with Quills

Today quillwork is almost a lost art among the Blackfeet. However, accounts written more than a century ago refer to quillwork as a flourishing decorative art in which Blackfeet women were very pro- 237 531 294

Compared with the quillwork of neighboring tribes to the east, Blackfeet quillwork techniques were both few in number and simple in performance. They seem to have lacked the weaving technique of the Cree and the multiple quill sewing and plaiting of the Dakota. The preference of the Blackfeet for narrow bands of quillwork limited the possibilities for variety in design motifs. Small, angular designs predominate in Blackfeet quillwork. 237 53 [171]

BEADWORK

Blackfeet bead embroidery originated within the historic period and had a dual origin. The little glass or china beads themselves, made by Venetian craftsmen in far-off Italy, were introduced by White fur traders. For ways to use these beads the native women turned to their traditional Indian craft of quillwork for inspiration. In the selection of articles and areas for decoration and in the choice of designs, Blackfeet beadworkers followed the traditions of the older craft. Like quillwork also, beadwork has been a woman's craft. 301 [177] [439] [462]

History of Blackfeet Beadwork

The history of Blackfeet use of beads may be divided into three periods. The first period may be termed the Pre-embroidery or Bead Necklace Period, during which large beads were used to make necklaces,

301
824

31. Necklace of wild rosehaw.

[P-32-A]

were old people fifty or more years ago. 323
According to these descriptions the vessels
usually were made of wet, sticky clay tem-
pered with sand or pulverized rock. They
were either shaped with the hands or molded
inside or around a stiff rawhide mold. Then [237]
they were dried in the sun, rubbed all over
with fat and hardened beside or over a fire.
The cooking vessel was cylindrical in shape, 323
flat bottomed, with two holes on opposite 415
sides near the rim for the attachment of a [252]
rawhide or sinew handle. The vessel was 237
probably suspended over the fire from a tri- [417]
pod by means of a long wooden hook sup-
porting the handle. The cooking vessel
probably had a capacity of at least two gal-
lons. There is some evidence that a flat
pottery serving dish, and a straight sided,
ceremonial serving beaker were also made.
Women were generally the potters among 323
the Blackfeet, although the ceremonial ves- [462]
sel was said to have been fashioned by a
man. Blackfeet pottery was heavy, thick, [171]
undecorated, and certainly very crude in
comparison with that made by the Mandan
and neighboring village tribes on the Mis-
souri.

Tobacco Pipe Making

The typical Blackfeet tobacco pipe in the 276
days before they obtained metal tools is be- 324
lieved to have been a hollow tube of clay
or stone in one end of which a short, straight
wooden stem was inserted. However, since [412]
the early years of the nineteenth century, a

[P.56-B]

43: Ewers E,G-5 (1941-1944) 1970
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Brief Communications

Bodily Proportions as Guides to Lineal Measurements among the Blackfoot Indians

John C. Ewers
Smithsonian Institution

Elderly Blackfoot informants a quarter century ago recalled certain bodily proportions used by craftsmen and women as guides to lineal measurement in prereservation days. Still other measurements of similar character appear to have been introduced to these Indians by white traders.
[Blackfoot, Assiniboin, Omaha, measurements, arrow-making, trade goods]

Accepted for publication 1 July 1969.

My oldest informants among the Piegan and Blood Indians during the early and middle 1940s were not only members of the last generation of their people to possess lively memories of life in buffalo days, but they also comprised the last generation of the Blackfoot to lack formal schooling and to speak little English. When members of the younger, schooled generations mentioned the length of objects, they spoke in terms of feet and inches. But men and women of the oldest generation expressed lineal measurements in terms of bodily proportions, as their ancestors must have referred to them long ago.

I made no special investigation of lineal measurements per se, but my field notes contain repeated references to older informants' interpretations of these measurements in terms of bodily proportions, especially in their discussions of the manufacture of horse gear and the making of bows and arrows.

The fingerwidth and handwidth were the most commonly mentioned units. Women were the skilled workers in rawhide and makers of riding gear among the Blackfoot in buffalo days. Informants said that they commonly made hackamores and bridles two fingers wide, stirrrup straps one finger wide, and common cruppers and martingales three fingers wide. Three fingers was also considered the most desirable width for a

45: Dempsey H-5 (1960) 1963
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACKFOOT QUILLWORK

Abstract

Quillwork among the Indian tribes of the Northwest as practised by the women embodied features of religious significance of a restrictive nature. Only a few women had the right to do this work and it was they who gave permission for others to be initiated into the religious pattern. The symbolisms, while varying between tribes, included specific prayers, face and hand painting and the wearing of specific ornaments, such as necklaces, while quilling. Quill work was done in return for gifts and the finished product could not be sold. Designs could be used only by the owner unless they were given away.

The religious significance of art forms among the Blackfoot Indians has generally been associated with the men. Such fields as the painting and transferring of tipi designs, or the painting of war exploits on buffalo robes or shields were male responsibilities and were accompanied by religious ceremonies and taboos.

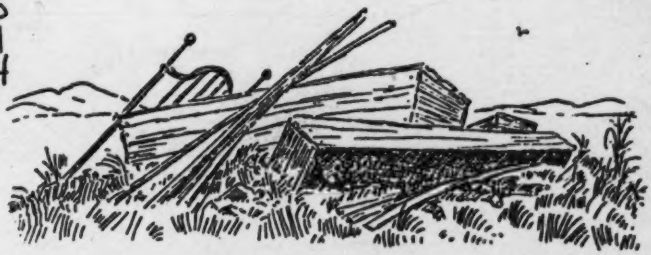
However, little religious significance has been attached to female crafts. The painting of parfleche containers, lodge liners, etc., or the beading or ornamenting of clothing for non-religious use depended mainly upon the maker's skill.

While details of the techniques of Blackfoot quillwork have been recorded, primarily by Orchard (1916) and Ewers (1945), only passing attention has been given to the religious significance of this pre-European craft. The most detailed comments have been made by Ewers, who stated it was a "sacred craft" and that "younger women were initiated ceremonially into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills" (Ewers 1945). Although quillworking is now almost a forgotten art among the Blackfoot, there are at least seven persons who have occasionally done such work in the past decade. Of

531
[431]
[425]
462
532
462
531
531
[178]
[178]
[P-52-A]

731 124 his very soul suggested that the marks upon him from this awful experience had not hardened into mere scars but were still open and painful wounds.

657 175 731 764



THE STARVATION YEAR

657 175 731 [462] At that time they had moved the Agency from Four Persons [Choteau] to Running Crane's place on Big Badger Creek. Now they were moving it again to Old Agency. Most of the things were hauled in two-wheeled ox-carts, and most of the work was done by women. A log stockade was being built around the Agency, and this work was done by the women too. At that time our men had good horses and they were hunters and they did not do women's work. At that time Chief [622] Calf, also known as Buffalo Head, whose influence as head chief of the Piegans was shared by my father, Onistáipokah, died over in Canada. Chief Calf had promised to give Skunk Cap [789] a horse, and when he broke his promise, Skunk Cap performed a secret ceremony to bring Chief Calf bad luck. Two days after the ceremony, Chief Calf died. They brought Chief Calf back home and buried him on a ridge near Old Agency. Before that year was over, hundreds of Piegans were to be buried on that same ridge.

Before the stockade around Old Agency had been completed, the Starvation Year began. The buffalo were gone. My father 175 had led us on the winter hunt the year before, and we had 731 found plenty of buffalo. The old men had called the buffalo with 224 the Beaver Power, and with the power of the Thunder Pipe 789 they had caused the direction of the wind to change so that

86 training which was characterized by the modal life history. A
159 The young Blood of the past were also subject to such influences, influences preparing them for the specific problems of their environment and in the provincial terms of the early high prairie.

855 175 The natives of all these countries are fond of their children, they have faults like other children but are not corrected by being beat. Contempt and ridicule are the correctives employed, and they shame them, without breaking their spirit. And as they are all brought up in the open camp, the other children help in the punishment.[19]

Clearly, this is one way to build into the growing individual 178 a lively sense of shame. As indicated in the modal life history and in the discussion of the rejected I.A.'s, this sense of shame still exists. Correction by shaming and contempt can easily result in the avoidance of situations that 462 might be interpreted as status threatening. Therefore, the 562 young Blood-Blackfoot of the 1800's would avoid womanly work just as the young Blood of today shies away from indoor and other employment which would restrict his movement. One effect of this sense of shame is the following:

181 175 . . . but the Indian is very different . . . hence his whole life is in the enjoyment of his passions, desires and affections concentrated within a small circle, and in which it is often intense.[20]

578 In this quotation can be seen the genesis of the contemporary Blood avoidance of aggression and unfriendliness and his readiness for immediate reward. The quotation also indicates that

A, [See Category 128, pp. 56-57; Category 159, pp. 57-59--Analyst]

626 This is important evidence for the distinction between what Indian communities expected from Indians and what they expected from others. It also indicates the reverse aspect of the "hautiness of character" delineated by Thompson, and identifies the reason that the early Blood-Blackfoot could not bear disgrace, especially in public. The preceding four quotations from Schultz indicate shame as a significant variable. Shame, as it has been developed through the preceding parts of this chapter, is strongly related to male/female role differentiation. Thus, it would appear that there is considerable evidence for the judgment that many of the rejected occupations have in common a confusion of or potential confusion of role identity as regards male and female identification.

593 This relationship appears to color other aspects of Blackfoot interests.

> "Is it because you love me no more that you tell me this?" And when I replied that I was thinking only of her comfort, she added: "I am no white woman, to be housed up, and waited on. It is my duty to go with you and do the cooking; keeping the lodge warm; do all I can to make you comfortable."52

Again the stress is on the complementary nature of male-female roles, and again the boundaries of this particular set of role expectations are set at the edge of the Indian community. Particularly noteworthy in this quotation is

462

462 the description of cooking and staying indoors as female duties. Small wonder that the young Blood of today strongly 183 reject Cook-Baker and Store Keeper. Further, this quotation 827 testifies to the universality of the meaningfulness of physical ability among the Blood. Both man and woman are to expect and overcome hardship to perform their socially significant tasks. This necessity was illustrated in the hardiness training mentioned by Thompson and in the jests and jibes of the tippling thief toward his wives. Schultz comments further on this aspect.

175 82 [291] [515]

> I went on several of these hunts when the weather was so cold that a buffalo hide froze stiff as it dropped away from the cut of the knife; yet the Indians skinned their quarry barehanded. . . . The Indians wore only a couple of shirts, a pair of blanket or cowskin leggings, fur cap, buffalo robe, gloves, and moccasins--no socks. Yet they never froze, nor even shivered from the cold. They attributed their indifference to exposure to the beneficial effect of their daily baths, which were always taken, even if a hole had to be cut in the ice for the purpose. And they forced their little children to accompany them, little fellows from three years of age up, dragging the unwilling ones from their beds and carrying them under their arms to the icy plunge.[53] [856] [863]

175 826 A freezing dip in the river speaks strongly for a concern over health and vitality as does the image of dragging squalling youngsters to the bath. This concern also extends to the previously mentioned vanity and attractiveness.

> Came from the north, from the camp of our brother tribe, the Bloods, four young men to visit friends in our camp, and one of them was Low Horn, he who was nicknamed

000

As among the Indians in general, the lot of a Plains Indian woman was not an easy one. The men hunted, fought, and made their own weapons. The rest was left to the women. As Maximilian observed, "The women, who in general are well-treated among the Blackfoot [*that is, presumably, if one overlooks the custom of wife-swapping; see Maximilian's entry for August 15*], have to perform all the heavy work. They pitch the tents, chop and haul wood, and lay it around the base of the tents at the base. They cook, eat, gather and carry home the firewood, tan the hides, and care for the pieces of clothing. In short, they are rather busy." Opposite: a young Piegan Blackfoot woman whose husband allowed her to pose in return for a gift of vermilion and glass beads. Above: A Snake Indian woman, wife of the engagé Marcereau. Maximilian attributed her dark complexion to a liver disorder.

562
462
124
000

A, [See Category 291, p. 126--Analyst]

[p. 127]